



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Kennedy, Peoples-Stokes Announce Public Hearing on Child Protective Services

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY November 6, 2013

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*Public hearing, to be held November 14 at Buffalo City Hall, will examine the practices of Child Protective Services in Erie County and explore issues facing protective services across the state.*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy and Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes, both Democrats from Buffalo, today announced an important public hearing that will examine the practices of Child Protective Services in Erie County. At the public hearing November 14 at Buffalo City Hall, the state lawmakers aim to uncover any potential problems that currently exist within Child Protective Services and identify improvements that can be made to the system.

This public hearing follows the tragic death of five-year-old Eain Clayton Brooks, who was allegedly beaten to death by his mother's live-in boyfriend. In the days after the boy died, family members came forward with details of their numerous attempts to get Erie County Child Protective Services to intervene and stop the abuse Eain was suffering. Just last year, 10-year-old Abdifatah Mohamud was murdered by his stepfather after Erie County CPS conducted an investigation but did not taken any action to remove him from the home. In response to these child fatalities, state lawmakers have scheduled the public hearing to examine the practices of Child Protective Services in Erie County.

Following Eain's death, the state quickly answered Kennedy's call for an investigation into Child Protective Services and began reviewing local cases to ensure children were being kept safe and investigations were being conducted thoroughly. In light of the child fatalities that have rocked Erie County in recent years, Kennedy and Peoples-Stokes have been extremely vocal in their calls for – and aggressive in their pursuit of – reform of Child Protective Services in Erie County and across the state.

Peoples-Stokes and Kennedy are now working with the Assembly's Committee on Children and Families and the Committee on Oversight, Analysis and Investigations – as well as the committees' respective chairs Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo and Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi – to bring together expert testifiers who will shed light on apparent challenges and present potential solutions to improve child protective services.

“As NYS Child and Family Services is the regulatory authority charged with ensuring that the welfare of our children is protected, it is our responsibility to make sure that they are receiving the best care and services. There are far too many children dying at the hands of those who are supposed to be protecting them. It is time for us to look into how we can do better, so that the needs of voiceless can be heard,” stated Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes.

“The deaths of Eain Brooks and Abdifatah Mohamud are heartbreaking and intolerable tragedies. We must ensure the state and county take decisive actions to keep all children safe from harm and ensure no family ever again has to suffer the pain of losing a child to abuse,” said Senator Tim Kennedy. “This public hearing will help us shed light on problems and challenges facing Child Protective Services in Erie County and across the state. It is the next step in our efforts to gather information and devise solutions that will ensure Child Protective Services is meeting its obligation to protect our children. In Eain's case, Abdi's case and possibly others, the system failed. We cannot let it happen again. The system needs

reform, and the next step is the public hearing.”

The public hearing on Erie County Child Protective Services will start at 10 a.m. on November 14 and be held in Council Chambers on the 13th Floor of Buffalo City Hall, 65 Niagara Square.

Individuals interested in testifying can contact Senator Kennedy’s office at 716-826-2683 or the office of Assemblywoman Peoples-Stokes office at 716-897-9714 for further details. More information about how to register to testify is also accessible at <http://assembly.state.ny.us/comm/Children/20131101/>.

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate’s 63rd District, which is comprised of the town of Cheektowaga, the city of Lackawanna and nearly all of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.*

*Assemblymember Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes represents the New York State Assembly’s 141st District which covers a large portion of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Crystal-D-Peoples-Stokes>.*