

THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



CATHARINE M. YOUNG  
SENATOR  
57TH DISTRICT

May 19, 2015

**CHAIR**  
HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION &  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
LEGISLATIVE RURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

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CHILDREN & FAMILIES  
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Ms. Sheila J. Poole  
Acting Commissioner  
NYS Office of Children and Family Services  
52 Washington Street  
Rensselaer, New York 12144

Re: Death of Nayla Hodnett

Dear Acting Commissioner Poole:

I am writing to you today regarding the heartbreaking death of Nayla Hodnett, a young child from my Senate District who passed away in April 2014.

Nayla Hodnett lived with her mother Angel Hodnett, and according to some reports, her mother's boyfriend Tyler Perez, on Newland Avenue in Jamestown, New York, for the first sixteen months of her life. On Wednesday, April 16, 2014, at around 8:45 p.m., Angel Hodnett brought her daughter Nayla to the emergency room at WCA Hospital in Jamestown with injuries that police later determined to be caused by blunt force trauma. Emergency crews at WCA then transferred the infant girl to Women and Children's Hospital in Buffalo, where despite surgery, she tragically died at 7:36 a.m. Thursday, April 17, 2014.

Regrettably, this is where the facts of the case become unclear.

Since Nayla's passing, City of Jamestown Police and the Chautauqua County District Attorney's office have worked diligently to investigate all aspects of the case. However, at this time no one has been formally charged in connection to the child's death.

Through my conversations with Chautauqua County Commissioner of Social Services Christine Schuyler, it has come to my attention that local Child Protective Services did not have contact with the child prior to her death.

However, there are some reports that the child had been taken to a hospital on a previous occasion for a possible broken leg.

I am respectfully asking you to use your power as Commissioner for the Office of Children and Family Services to begin a full investigation into any possible reports the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment may have received regarding allegations or incidents of possible abuse to Nayla, or her two siblings, Ezra and Honor, prior to the April 16, 2014 incident.

I thank you in advance for your careful consideration of this matter and respectfully ask that you inform me of your decision to review the case, and any finds that are determined, at your first convenience.

Sincerely,



Catharine M. Young  
Senator, 57<sup>th</sup> District

CMY/bd