

THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY 12247



PATRICK M. GALLIVAN

April 26, 2012

Ms. Gladys Carrion  
Commissioner  
New York State Office of Child & Family Services  
Capital View Office Park  
52 Washington Street  
Rensselaer, New York 12144-2834

Dear Commissioner Carrion:

As I am sure you are aware, a 10-year-old boy from Buffalo, New York, Abdifatah Mohamud, was brutally killed earlier this month after being beaten over 60 times with a rolling pin by his step-father.

It is difficult to contemplate the horror Abdifatah endured in his final hours, or the grief that his family must cope with, but what is almost as troubling, is the possibility that it could have been prevented.

Warning signs existed, pleas for help were made, and it appears that the system designed to protect children like Abdifatah failed. Since 2009, Buffalo Police responded to over 10 calls to the Mohamud home, some of which were domestic violence related complaints. In April of last year, Abdifatah called police himself because he feared his step-father was going to harm him. At this point Erie County Child Protective Services were notified, and they investigated again in June after Abdifatah arrived at school bruised and battered.

Without implying any wrong doing on the part of Child Protective Services at this time, I remain concerned that such a troubling pattern existed for so long, and apparently little to no action was taken to protect Abdifatah.

Confidentiality laws shield many Child Protective Services' records from public or governmental review, making it difficult to determine exactly where the system failed and what can be done to prevent a future incident of this nature from occurring.

As a New York State Senator and Chairman of the Senate Social Services Committee, I call on you as the Commissioner of New York State Child and Family Services to use your authority to conduct a complete review of the events surrounding Abdifatah Mohamud's death so that we can identify why this happened, if it could have been prevented, if an appropriate investigation took place, and to identify what, if any, reforms can be made to ensure that this never happens again.

If my office can be of any assistance to you regarding this matter or your subsequent investigation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With best wishes and kind regards,

  
Patrick M. Gallivan  
Senator - 59<sup>th</sup> District

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