



## NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

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April 19, 2021

Eastern Service Area Child Welfare Contract Special Investigative and Oversight Committee:

Senator John Arch  
Senator Robert Clements  
Senator Suzanne Geist  
Senator Matt Hansen  
Senator Mark Kolterman  
Senator Terrell McKinney  
Senator Dave Murman  
Senator Rita Sanders  
Senator Justin Wayne

Health and Human Services Committee:

Senator John Arch  
Senator Machaela Cavanaugh  
Senator Jen Day  
Senator Ben Hansen  
Senator Dave Murman  
Senator Lynne Walz  
Senator Matt Williams

***RE: Investigation Into St. Francis Ministries Contract***

Dear Senators:

As you begin your important work into investigating the contracting that led to the current situation with St. Francis Ministries, I want to make clear the perspective of state workers who have witnessed the on-going harm to very vulnerable children and families.

Regardless of the findings your committees make into the contracting process, the outsourcing of ongoing case management of these children to a third party is a statewide embarrassment. We encourage you to look into returning case management back to the Department of Health & Human Services to be performed by qualified state employees as it is done in 91 of our 93 counties.

Case management is some of the most important work entrusted to the DHHS Division of Children and Family Services. Our union represents over 400 Children and Family Service Specialists who provide these services in all of Nebraska except for Douglas and Sarpy Counties. These dedicated women and men work tirelessly to ensure the safety of the children in their care, despite a starting salary of just \$33,000 per year.

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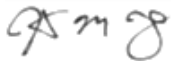
State employees are directly accountable to the taxpayers and have a vested interest in improving the lives of their neighbors in order to create strong communities. A Kansas based contractor, albeit a non-profit, has no such interest. State employees are also directly accountable to the Legislature which provides funding and oversight to DHHS. If this work were performed by state employees, the Legislature would not be investigating a flawed contracting process, but instead would have directly appropriated funds and maintained direct accountability for the work to be performed.

Our union warned of the pitfalls of outsourcing over a decade ago. Shifting the work of state government to private entities has not worked. Frontline state employees are often best situated to providing feedback and can offer solutions to avoid major pitfalls. Simply put, outsourcing is penny wise and pound foolish. Whatever money was thought to be saved from contracting with St. Francis has now been lost in additional spending as well as what will surely be a costly investigation.

We are happy to work with you through your investigative process. Our members do some of the most important work in our communities each day. Our CFS Specialists in Douglas and Sarpy counties are acutely aware of the shortcomings of St. Francis Ministries. They see failures in the field each and every day and they would be available to provide information for your investigation.

It is our hope that through this process, better decisions are made to ensure that appropriate services are provided by dedicated state employees. In the end, all Nebraskans will benefit through stronger communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Hubly".

Justin Hubly  
Executive Director