

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

November 16, 2021

Critical Incident in Norwalk

On October 29, 2021, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's (LASD) Special Victims Bureau arrested a foster mother in the City of Norwalk for her alleged involvement in the abuse of a four-year-old boy. An innocent child was allegedly hurt by the hands of someone who was supposed to protect him.

Previously, in response to the heinous Gabriel F. case and subsequent recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection, the Board of Supervisors established the Office of Child Protection as a way to transform our child welfare system and ensure an integrated approach to child protection. While we investigate the motives of such senseless alleged abuse by the foster mother, we need to assess the resources, services, and programs in place throughout Los Angeles County to ensure that children stay safe, and that no child is ever removed and placed in a home that will result in any harm.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct:

1. The Office of Child Protection (OCP), with the assistance of County Counsel, to

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conduct a full investigation, including the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and any other relevant Los Angeles County (County) agencies that may have had contact with the family in this case, to review the history of contacts, including any referrals to a Medical Hub, and to identify any systemic issues that may have impeded the coordination of services;

2. DCFS should review and assess the experience level and length of service of social workers who worked on this case, including, but not limited to, how they addressed the family's language and cultural barriers;
3. DCFS, OCP, and the Department of Health Services to review existing DCFS policies and training protocols for social workers on forensic referrals to the Medical Hubs, especially for children in out-of-home care, and to report back on recommendations to:
 - a. Strengthen DCFS social workers' understanding of the forensic evaluation process; and,
 - b. Streamline and improve the forensic evaluation referral process as needed;
4. DCFS shall include an update about the standing case-quality assurance team and the methodology and criteria for when targeted reviews take place;
5. Aforementioned to be reported back to the Board in 45 days, as permitted by law.

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JH: mk