



RORY REID
Chairman

Board of County Commissioners

CLARK COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
500 S GRAND CENTRAL PKY
BOX 551601
LAS VEGAS NV 89155-1601
(702) 455-3500 FAX: (702) 383-6041

November 19, 2008

The Honorable Jim Gibbons
Office of the Governor
Nevada State Capitol
101 N. Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Governor Gibbons:

As you are aware, the State of Nevada Division of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Clark County Department of Family Services (DFS) have worked diligently to create a strong partnership with the goal of improving child welfare services to the children and families of Clark County. More changes and improvements have been made in the past 18 months to ensure the safety and care of children under the custody and protection of Clark County than at any other time in the history of the department.

I am writing to you today because once again we have received a request for proposed budget cuts to child welfare, and once again I must assert that the child welfare system in Nevada has historically been under funded and that any budget reductions to those services are simply unacceptable. The extent of the cuts you propose will decrease the safety of children, bringing us below the highly criticized performance levels of 2005.

While I certainly respect the dire economic situation that is facing all government agencies, we must ensure an ongoing fiscal partnership with the State of Nevada to carry out federally mandated services to our most vulnerable citizens. With the current economic downturn we have seen an increase in service demand in our community and cannot risk the reduction in service capacity that cutbacks would bring.

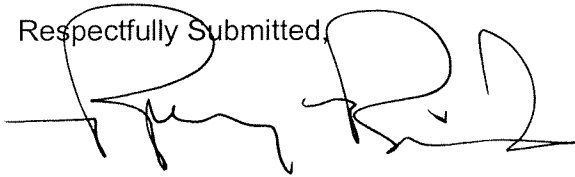
In addition to the negative impacts this would have on the well-being of children and families, I remind you that the immediate cost savings garnered by any budget reduction to child welfare services pale in comparison to the potential financial penalties we face for inadequate services. 2009 will bring a Federal review of child welfare services, and non-compliance will mean imposition of penalties on the State of Nevada by the US Department of Health and Human Services that could total millions of dollars more than any current savings resulting from the proposed budget cut. Furthermore, both the State of Nevada and Clark County have been enjoined in litigation by the National Center for Youth Law. We have finally reached a point in that litigation where mediation may provide a satisfactory resolution. Our ability to mediate that case is predicated on our demonstration to a Federal Court that we are making progress in

The Honorable Jim Gibbons
November 19, 2008
Page Two

improving services to children and that, *without significant Court involvement*, permanent, lasting change will be made for the betterment of our child welfare system.

As a Clark County Commission, we remain steadfast in our pledge to improve services to children and families. Clark County is also experiencing a budget crisis, and while we are evaluating all government services we provide and looking for ways to reduce costs, our commitment to children and families will not falter. We encourage the State of Nevada to make that same commitment – the children of our state deserve nothing less.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rory Reid', written over a horizontal line.

Rory Reid
Clark County Commission, Chairman

cc: Virginia Valentine, County Manager
Mike Willden, Department of Health and Human Services
Joan Ohi, Administration for Children and Families
Senator Steven Horsford, Majority Leader
Senator William Raggio
Speaker Barbara Buckley