

# SACRAMENTO COUNTY CHILDREN'S COALITION

Appointed by the Sacramento County  
Board of Supervisors

August 28, 2009

Supervisor Susan Peters, Chair  
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors  
700 H Street, Suite 2450  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Supervisor Peters,

We are writing on behalf of the Sacramento County Children's Coalition and its Child Protective Systems Oversight Committee to express our urgent concern regarding reductions to the Department of Health and Human Services, Child Protective Services (CPS) FY2009-2010 budget. As you know, CPS is responsible for investigating child abuse and neglect, removing children for their protection, placing them in a safe living situation, as well as keeping at-risk children safe through family strengthening. It is our understanding that between county general fund reductions to CPS's budget and cuts in state and federal funding, CPS will lose an additional 199.4 FTEs on top of losses experienced earlier this summer. We are deeply troubled by what a nearly one-quarter reduction of this workforce means for abused and neglected children in our community.

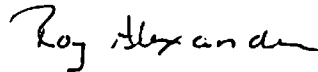
Several reports issued this past year, specifically the Child Protective Systems Oversight Committee Annual Report, MGT of America's performance evaluation, and the Sacramento Grand Jury report, highlighted deficiencies within the County's Child Protective Services division. Additionally, there is a federal mandate to improve Child Welfare Services nationwide. Under the direction of Laura Coulthard, CPS has begun to find solutions to many long-term problems, despite being understaffed. As stated succinctly in the MGT report, "Our review found that children and families in the Sacramento Child welfare system are underserved...." Cutting resources to Child Protective Services will critically impact child welfare reform efforts, program improvement work in progress and ultimately vital child protection efforts in the County. The Grand Jury report was subtitled, "Nothing ever changes, ever;" reducing funding at this time will further support that prognostication.

Pragmatically, the Coalition and the Committee realize that budget cuts are necessary and each member of the Board has difficult choices to make. Should the decision be made to cut funding to CPS, we urge you to maintain adequate funding to continue oversight of improvement plans, ensure performance accountability, and, at minimum, maintain caseload size. We urge you to focus on preserving direct services to children wherever possible. Thank you for your consideration and time.

Sincerely,



Donna Sneeringer, Chair  
Sacramento County Children's Coalition



Roy Alexander, Chair  
Child Protective Systems Oversight Committee

Cc: Members, Sacramento County Board of Supervisors  
Members, Sacramento County Children's Coalition  
Members, Child Protective Systems Oversight Committee  
Laura Coulthard, DHHS Child Protective Services