

Brown, Shirley K.

From: Kate M Mrgudic [katemrgudic@bresnan.net]
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2005 8:07 AM
To: Brown, Shirley K.
Subject: Testimony

Shirley - this flu came at a most inconvenient time - please deliver the following testimony on my behalf to the Subcommittee today.

Madame Chair Kaufman and members of the Committee: For the record my name is Kate Mrgudic. I have worked with the Division of Child and Family Services since 1992 in a variety of capacities. Most recently I have provided intense supervision/leadership training to all CFS supervisors and managers beginning in October 2004. The training will be completed this month.

During the last several months I have had the opportunity to work with the Management Team and supervisors in deepening management skills, identifying problems and action steps to address them, and in an intensive resource analysis process. The last endeavor resulted in several proactive action plans that support the Division efforts in accomplishing their Program Improvement Plan.

I have been continually impressed with the dedication, resourcefulness and creativity demonstrated by the participants. These are individuals who do some of the hardest work in the state, investigating child abuse, have been chronically understaffed and yet remain dedicated to do what is required to keep children safe and families strong. They are also frustrated, frustrated that local and state elected representatives and the general public do not wholeheartedly support the protection of children through the adequate provision of staff for the division.

In facilitating in depth discussions over the last several months, hearing the stories, I know the Division's management staff in Helena and in the field are doing everything they can to address the demands of their work and meet federal requirements. They are not miracle workers and need additional support in the field to do the job required. It is such a critical job - protecting children - and it demands your support.

I would encourage the Committee to (1) support the Division's budget request as presented and (2) have the Interim Committee on Health and Human Services do an indepth study with the Division on its staffing needs and bring a recommendation to the next session so that children in Montana remain safe and families receive the assistance they require to remain healthy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Kate Mrgudic, M.A.

The toll is there however. I urge this Committee to support the Division's budgetary requests this year.

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EXHIBIT

DATE Mon Feb 1 2005

HB _____

Brown, Shirley K.**Subject: FW: Budget Hearing**

----- Original Message -----

Dear Director Brown,

I regret not being able to testify in person before the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. Please read or submit a copy of this e-mail to the Committee for me.

Dear Committee Members:

As Co-chair of the Child and Family Services Advisory Committee I strongly urge you to continue to support the efforts of the Child and Family Services Division to carry out their statutory mandate of providing for the safety and well being of the children referred to their care.

Children that have been removed from a family situation that endangers their well being have been subjected to loneliness, misunderstanding of the situation, mistrust, abandonment, shock and at times violence. To have any chance to lead a better life, succeed in school, or become re-united with their families these children must have a stable, supportive, caring Foster Home. They need Counselors and access to Mental Health Services. They need more Social Workers so that the sheer number of cases carried don't prevent a Social Worker from giving all the attention that is needed to an individual case,

Foster parents take a huge risk financially, physically and emotionally when they take a child into their care. Please support them. Without them, who will care for these children?

I could speak passionately and make a case for every item included in this budget. I know your time is limited. I will conclude by saying that if you think the greatest treasure in this state is our youth then please be sure that ALL of our children have an opportunity to become all that they are capable of being.

Thank you,

Edith J. Clark

EXHIBIT [REDACTED]

DATE Mon Feb 1 2005

HB _____

FORT PECK TRIBES

Assiniboine & Sioux

January 31, 2005

To: Montana Legislative House Joint Appropriations Committee

Committee Members:

My name is Patty McGeshick, Director Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribe Family Violence Resource Center. Today I understand that the Committee is considering DPHHS/Child & Family Services Division budget request. Our reservation is unique as the Tribes, Bureau of Indians and the DPHHS/CFS negotiated an agreement that outlined the responsibilities of each governmental agency responding to child protection. This multi-governmental agreement forged a partnership to provide oversight and evaluation for monitoring child protection cases.

The quality of child protection services is contingent upon the approval of the department budget request. Should there be a decrease in any funding it would have an impact on the delivery of services to children who are at risk. The department has the responsibility to provide quality services to children who need protection as these children are not able to advocate for themselves and are dependant upon the outcomes of your decisions.

I give my support to the DPHHS/CFS Division for any budget amounts that they are requesting. Funding adequately means a difference between saving lives and losing a child.

Respectfully,



Patty McGeshick
Fort Peck Tribes FRC
Fort Peck Indian Reservation