October 22, 2012

Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services
235 S. Grand Ave.
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Director of Department of Human Services,

My name is ____________. I am a current student at Baker College working towards a Bachelor Degree in Early Childhood Education. As an up and coming Early Childhood Educator it is my duty to be informed on the current condition of all the children that will come across my path throughout my career. While doing research on advocating for young children I came across an interesting Class Action Complaint that was filed back in 2006 by Dwayne B., Carmela B., Lisa J., and Julia, Simon, and Courtney G.

This Class Action Complaint was filed on behalf of all the children that are or will be in foster care custody in in-home or out-of-home placements. The complaint was seeking justice and corrections for the Maltreatment/neglect of foster children while in state custody, as well as, a lack of basic physical and mental health services for foster children, excessive lengths of stay in state custody, frequent moves among multiple placements. These issues were reportedly caused by the following deficiencies in Michigan’s foster care system: A severe shortage of foster homes, high caseloads and turnover, poor monitoring of children’s safety, poor planning and services to move children out of foster care and into permanent homes, grossly inadequate payments to foster care providers, and fiscal waste.

In the Monitoring reports that followed the Modified Settlement Agreements and Commitments I have seen the proof that real progress has been and is continuing to be made. I am curious about how the Policies and Standards are founded and implemented within the new Children’s Services Administration Department. However, I am concerned that not all the commitments have been met that were stated in the Settlement Agreement. These children that are coming into the world are our future Doctors, Waste Management workers, Lawyers, Cashier workers. It is important for us to make sure that they receive the most of everything that society and our communities have to offer. That means equal and fair treatment in Education, Society, and our environment, which includes but is not limited to, Health, Family Life, Mental Health, Social Interaction, etc.

In writing this letter, I understand that DHS has appointed a new Director since the filing of this Lawsuit and think it appropriate to ask what is it that is being done differently than back in 2006 when Marianne Udow was Director? And I would like to know more about the following things:

- The current status of the Department of Human Services and meeting the Modified Settlement Agreements and Commitments that were put in place as a result of the Class Action Complaint.
-How the Deficiencies in the Michigan Foster Care System have improved and continue to improve on all of the previously stated issues:
  - Maltreatment/neglect of foster children while in state custody
  - Lack of basic physical and mental health services for foster children
  - Excessive lengths of stay in state custody
  - Frequent moves among multiple placements

-The most current achievements and progress made in accommodating our children within the Foster Care System.

I would be most grateful if you could provide this information. This information can help me to better understand the minds and behaviors of some of the children that will be in my care as an Early Childhood Educator.

Sincerely,

Mrs.