To: Dr. Rani Walters, Director

Baltimore City Department of Social Services

2000 N. Broadway

Baltimore Md. 21213

From: Donna Matthews

5559 Channing Rd.

Baltimore Md. 21229

July 5, 2018

Re: Jayla Hines CT Docket #234500

Emily Hines #234598

Cory Hines #234499

Good day Dr. Randi Walters,

I am writing to ask that the hearing scheduled for mediation on July 11th be cancelled or postponed regarding the above-named respondents. I would like to put the state on notice that it is in violation of several federal and state laws when it comes to the handling of this case. I am asking that you forward this complaint to Internal Affairs. I will be forwarding a copy of this complaint to the appropriate agencies. BCDSS seems unwilling and/or unable to rectify this situation.

There are 3 major Federal and state laws at issue here. Not to mention The HIPPA privacy laws, (45CFR 160,162 & 164.) CAPTA (P.L. 111-320) and confidentiality laws. [18U.S.§ 1-202] & State § 1-202(2013).

It is illegal in all 50 states to reveal the reporter of child abuse. Not only did the state reveal who the reporter was but they put all the information in the court order as a witness against my own family. Then, they told me I wasn’t a party to the proceedings and that I could not be a part of the hearings. How does one be a witness against someone without even knowing it? In a recent therapy session with my granddaughter, Jayla cited this as her primary reason for not wanting to come live with me. She feels it’s my fault that she’s in foster care and not with her mother.

Second only, an employee of the state; Jeanette Arrington Robinson the employee & foster parent was given favor over a relative. It is against COMAR regulations for an employee to foster in the same jurisdiction in which they work, it is an obvious conflict of interest. Ms. Jeanette Robinson has looked up family members in Chessie in order to exact revenge and to maintain and secure custody of my grandchildren. Robinson reported to me on a visit that she was angry with Robin Jefferies, the former kinship caregiver because she refused to return a computer that belonged to Jayla. She reported to me that she looked up Ms. Jeffries on Chessie and found that they were still receiving $2400 dollars in food stamps for the children, so she reported them for fraud. While Ms. Jeffries was guilty of fraud a foster parent from the community could never do this. Robinson had an unfair advantage and she crossed the line professionally.

I sat and listened to Robinson talk badly about the children’s mother and their family for an hour; it never occurred to Robinson that the children’s mother is my family too. Ashley, their mother gave me three beautiful grandchildren. It was a tragedy to the family to lose Ashley, to drugs. I’ve known Ashley since was 15 years old and she used to be a good mother and wife but more importantly my son loved her and so did I.

I was afraid to tell Robinson I wanted my grandchildren after this encounter. I feared she would stop visits and never let me see my grandchildren, which is exactly what happened. I had asked Keisha Hunt the assigned social worker not to tell Ms. Robinson and the children that I was pursuing custody. I asked her to let me and my grandchildren have some healing time. Have a few visits. Go on some outings like we always do. Was that asking too much? We had one fun filled bowling trip and that was it. Keisha Hunt immediately told the foster parent and Jeanette Robinson texted me forbidding me to see the children again. I ask Hunt why she did this and she stated she felt they had a right to know.

It is obvious and the record will show that Keisha Hunt worked in tandem and conspired with Jeanette Robinson to keep me from my grandchildren and help Ms. Robinson adopt. I was informed by Ms. Elaine Jackson, the unity chief, that Keisha Hunt had been fired for this very reason. However, the agency did nothing to address the foster parent/DSS social worker side of the issue.

Even after having a unit meeting with Elaine Jackson, Keisha Hunt still went into a court of law and mis informed the DSS attorney and had him put a clause in the court order stating that only Jeanette Robinson could adopt. I’ve worked for The Agency for 17 years and have never seen this done. This is gross insubordination if not criminal. The DSS attorney reported that he was never told that a grandmother was involved even though I showed to court twice. Check the sign in books at court. It is unconscionable that Hunt would sit outside the courtroom with me and have a conversation and never tell the DSS attorney that I existed. In a conference call with Hunt’s supervisor she told her supervisor that she hadn’t spoken to me since the children first came into care. I had to produce my phone records to show that I made 21 international calls and spoke with Ms. Hunt a total of 111 minutes. Phone records don’t lie.

COMAR regulations allow protections for workers and/or former employees to be shielded if a child abuse case is received on that person. My case should have been sent to another jurisdiction to be investigated. The state failed however, to shield me when a report came in. I have been traumatized by this agency again and again for this agencies failure to comply with regulations that were put in place to protect people like myself and my family. Do you have any idea what it is like to be investigated by your former peers? Everyone knows that organizations have rumor mills. There is no way you can work at a place for 17 years and not be a part of the rumor mill.

I cannot tell you how much trauma I have suffered over this indicated sexual abuse charge on my record. There is also an indicated sexual assault charge from July 28th, 1998. I know because it was my son’s birthday. He was 11 years old when he was accused of 4th degree sex assault. I feel this is where our problems with DSS started. I will speak about this last.

In my final conversation with Ms. Keisha Hunt she informed me that I would no longer be able to visit my grandchildren and that if any visits were granted it would have to be through a mediation hearing. She further stated that it would be difficult for me to have visits because the sexual abuse codes were listed in my name. She told me that I would have to petition a judge to have the codes removed. I again pointed out that I was not the perpetrator. Ms Hunt reminded me that she had read the record and knew this but that it didn’t matter because it could take several months to have the codes removed and by then the children would be adopted. It doesn’t matter. Really? I should lose my grandchildren because of an incorrect P code. What good is a case record if it doesn’t mean anything?

Let’s be honest here. This case was always about those sexual abuse charges. It is my assessment that Hunt, and Robinson rationalized their illegal actions by convincing themselves that they were somehow saving my grandchildren. It didn’t matter that I turned my own son in and assisted the state in his prosecution. It didn’t matter that I moved to another country. Somehow, I’m was still the threat.

I initially tried to get BCDSS to approve my home in the Caribbean, but Hunt said that I must return to the US for six months. I asked her why; I mean, I’ve seen the Agency take children to Pakistan. Not to mention that Elaine Jackson, the unit chief expressed at the staffing we had that it was a ridiculous assertion that I was told that I had to return to the US for six months.

The reason Hunt said I had to return for 6 months was because of the sex trade. When Hunt gave me this explanation, I immediately knew that this had everything to do with the charges on my record and nothing to do with any sex trade. This is a ridiculous and scandalous assertion against my character. The standard to determine if a child will be in danger is; will the non-offending parent or caregiver protect the child. I did all of that and I might remind the agency that families do have a right to heal.

Finally, the July 28th, 1998 charges. I am tired of being the mother with the scarlet letter red. I believe that the state should take a good look at their Juvenile Sex Offenders program run by Baltimore County. It is my belief that the state is mentally injuring children. Not just Maryland however, since this happened to my family, I have done extensive research on this subject in preparation for a documentary I want to do on this subject. People need to be aware of the dangers of these kinds of programs to their children’s minds. Thanks, BCDSS for helping expand my vision and mission for this film.

You don’t put an 11-year-old child in a full fledge sex offenders’ program for accidently touching someone. My son was asleep in his bed, minding his own business, on the top bunk bed and it was 5am. The little girl wondered in the room and she reported, that she climbed up the bunk bed 3 times and tried to awaken my son, but he did not awaken until her third attempt. On the third attempt my son awakened partially and said, “Get out of my bed.” And he pushed her. She was balancing herself on the top bunkbed, so his hand touched the top part of her vagina on the outside of her nightgown. The little girl ran and told her mother that my son had pushed her down there real hard. Read the record for yourself.

The infraction was so small that they didn’t even think the child who was touched needed therapy or any counseling. But my son who was also a child was sent down the aisle of punishment and was subject to a program that was supposed to last 3 months but instead lasted 3 years. Not to mention the horrible Cheltenham experience. My son was in his formulative years and the state told him repeatedly that he was a perpetrator, a predator, a sex offender. It was a self-fulfilling prophecy. They taught my son the same aversion techniques that they used in the 60’s to try and get homosexuals to stop being homosexual. They teach you to sting yourself with rubber bands or yell at other children to get away if they think they are having a sexual feeling. How can children not play with other children? You made my child an outcast at 11 years old.

The only way to graduate from this program was to disclose how you planned the assault. They believe that the victim was groomed by the perpetrator. We could not figure out how he had planned or groomed the so-called victim. So, in the program we stayed. My son didn’t go to the child’s room or climb up into her bed. How did he plan it?

Somebody should have asked. Why is this child still in this program? But there is no judicial review before a judge or master to determine if the program is still necessary and/or if this program is helping the child. The person is essentially held captive to the program. All other type cases must be reviewed before the master or judge. Why not these cases?

When adults offend, they have a system of classification. They don’t put petty thieves with murderers. We have learned that it makes them worse. Why wouldn’t the same principals apply for children? They throw all the children in the same pile. The program did make allowances for children with learning disabilities, which my son had but I was told they didn’t have enough children for a group, so he was subject to some pretty sophisticated children and their crimes.

For 3 years we sat and listened to children talk about being offended and them offending others. There was even one child that was in love with his dog named Rose that he kept having sex with. I don’t care what the state says. No child should be subject to such an X rated program. My son didn’t plan it the first time, but he certainly learned to plan it after 3 years of your program. Again, I feel the state is mentally injuring children. There is nothing I can do for my son but maybe my project will help another child subject to such programs inappropriately. Granted many of the children needed such a program but for my son it was overkill.

I recently interviewed the new director of Baltimore County’s Juvenile Sex Offenders to see if the program had changed. (I’ve interviewed several directors around the country who run these programs.) While, she was aghast that my son was in the program for 3 years, the thing that stood out the most is that the state still does not look at intent. One cannot plan to offend someone without intent; therefore, this program is still flawed at its very core. I can’t imagine how many other children and families have suffered at the hands of this program. Perhaps you should do some long-term studies on families like mine to see what damage you have caused families and children.

There are children as young as 4 years old are being sentenced to programs like this across the Nation and many children are killing themselves over it. My son didn’t have a chance. The state is notorious for labeling young black boys. The state is also known to keep children in programs in order to justify their budgets. The end of the fiscal year was always like Christmas for our clients. That’s when they unofficially direct workers to spend up flex funds so they can keep their budgets. Perhaps the Juvenile Offenders Program needs budget money or something. I think the state should seriously consider shutting down this program until further safeguards can be put in place.

In closing, this is the second time that the state has destroyed my family. We are supposed to be about mending families and children not destroying them. Again, I am informing the state about the 3 major federal and state violations involved in this case. First, the reporter was revealed which is against state law. Second, a state employee is forbidden to foster in the same jurisdiction as they work because of the obvious conflict of interest. And finally, an employee or former employee has the right to be shielded when a report is received in their name. Not being shielded is what has caused people to make judgements about me and my family that are not true. To this point.

I did eventually gain custody of my grandson. He had to be hospitalized emergently one night. I was not given his medical passport when he was placed with me, so I had to call extended hours for help. I have never been so humiliated in my life. The extended hours staff said he couldn’t help me because he had pulled the order and read the record and that I wasn’t supposed to have Little Cory. He stated that he didn’t want to be responsible, so he had to call the on-call supervisor. Another trauma inflicted.

I had a case once that was sent to internal affairs. I discovered during an interview that a foster parent had swindled the agency for over 88 thousand dollars. What did the agency do? Nothing, they didn’t even close the home. They said it would be an embarrassment to the state. I know we need foster parents, but does everyone get a pass based on The Agency ‘s embarrassment?

How much money has Jeanette Robinson collected to take care of my grandchildren? If the mayor can’t sell books to the state, then Robinson can’t be given preference over family and then be paid for it. You are handing this case just like the beforementioned case. I will not allow the state to sweep this case under the rug. My son is dead, and these children are my only airs. Do you really think I should lose custody because I made a report that was founded? Or because my son, not me, committed a crime?

Jayla could get past this if she was surrounded by adults who didn’t have hidden agendas. Who else can the children be angry with but me? Their father is dead, and their mother signed them away. This is a part of the grieving process. Let us go through it. They can be angry with me. I’m their grandmother and I understand. And I can take it.

Up to this point I had intentionally kept Jeanette Robinson’s name out of any written communication. I made verbal complaints, but I didn’t want to put her name out there like that. I empathized with her. I know what its like to lose children you love. I’m glad she loved my grandchildren. It may be her job, but I recognized that she is human. Above all else, I didn’t want to tear her down in the eyes of the children because in the end if my grandchildren were awarded to her, I didn’t want her losing her job so that my grandchildren would be forced to live in poverty. So, I tried to let the system do its job, but it failed.

I even understand Hunt’s reluctance. There is nothing harder than having to remove children from foster parents who thought they could adopt. They scream and cry. There have been times I’ve cried with the foster parent. But we do what we must. This was one of the things Hunt and I spoke about during our 111-minute conversations. I even apologized to her for putting her in this position. I understood what she had to go through.

On July 3rd at the meeting with Sarah Otley, the newly assigned supervisor. It was brought to my attention that the children were coming to the mediation hearing on July 11th. Ms. Otley remarked that this is not usually done. To bring my own grandchildren to testify in a mediation hearing against me is about as low as you can go. She doesn’t need them. She already won. I’m sure her goal is that I get no visits. Jeanette Robinson actions on this case have been treacherous, spiteful and evil. Therefore, she has given me no other choice but to involve her.

My shame kept me from making waves before but not anymore. I have nothing else to lose. You took everything. My grandchildren, the mind of my son. A family’s dignity and respect. My reputation. My name has been slandered all over BCDSS and I’m in financial ruin. You don’t have someone move from another country and then not follow through on your promised commitment. A contract is an offer and a consideration. You made an offer then gave consideration on that offer in the form of furniture and security deposits. The things that have happened in this matter are unconscionable and The Agency expects me to walk away broken and accept their humble apology. Really? Never. I may not get my grandchildren back, but the world will know about this when I’m finished.

Sincerely,

Donna Matthews

C.C.

The Honorable Governor Larry Hogan

The Honorable Elisha Cummings, Congressman/ Regina Clay

Constitute Services

Board of Social Work Examiners