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October 3, 2016

State Director Susan Alford
South Carolina Department of Social Services
Post Office Box 1520
Columbia, South Carolina 29202-1520

Dear Director Alford:

While the House Legislative Oversight Committee approved its study of the agency on April 13, 2016, the study included a recommendation that the full committee follow up with the agency on recommended programmatic revisions at the beginning of the next calendar year. Listed below please find issues of interest that committee members would like to pursue at this time with the agency. Please provide an update on the agency's progress on the recommendations listed below on or before Tuesday, January 10, 2016, the first day of the legislative session.

- Institute annual mandatory staff training related to domestic violence;
- Consider and implement as appropriate, internal changes to track practices and performance measures relating to recruitment, licensure, and support services for foster families;
- Examine operational units for elimination, duplication, and streamlining of functions;
- Examine specific functions of the agency to determine if they best fit within the agency's core mission;
- Examine the need to reduce the size of administrative functions;
- Merge all administrative functions into one division;
- Examine the agency's over-reliance on contracting core services to external providers;
- Align supervision of county operations with the regional structure; and
- Standardize the regional structure of Economic Services and Human Services.

The agency stated it had merged administrative functions and aligned supervision of county operations with the regional structure prior to the completion of the study. In your update, please explain how these changes have benefited the state's residents and the agency. In this explanation, please identify any specific performance measures which have improved or costs which have decreased. In addition to an update on the recommendations from the report, committee members would also like responses to the following questions:

- Is there any consideration of privatizing foster care placement and follow-up?
- What is the foster home licensing goal of the "Champions for Children" campaign rolled out in the spring of 2016? How has the agency progressed towards accomplishing that goal?

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- Does the agency provide post traumatic event counseling services for caseworkers when a child is injured or dies in care?

In your response to these questions, please provide the committee with any relevant, necessary contextual information. If the agency has any concerns (1) about the format of these questions yielding answers that do not provide an accurate reflection of the agency, or (2) that the requests may in any manner compromise the safety and security of children under agency care, our state government, agency employees, or any individuals. Please retain your working papers for these responses in the event the committee would like to view those. We appreciate your team following up on these issues and providing the information. We also appreciate the agency's cooperation throughout the legislative oversight process.

Sincerely,



Signature Redacted

Wm. Weston J. Newton

cc: House Legislative Oversight Committee