

We, the 1624 Consultation Team, a group of foster parents' representatives who serve as liaisons between Foster Parents and DCYF staff would like to submit our support for WFSE DCYF members in their vote of no confidence against DCYF Secretary Ross Hunter.

We believe that social workers have made significant attempts since 2018 to work with Mr. Hunter to accomplish the agency mission to "protect children and strengthen families so they flourish." While several safety concerns have been discussed as well as possible recommendations, no resolutions have been made.

We stand in support with WFSE members of DCYF that the actions and decisions of Mr. Hunter proves he does not listen to WFSE and does not understand what they need to be successful at their jobs.

We agree this impacts the legislation and recommendations made to the legislature. We also agree that Mr. Hunter has perpetuated misinformation about WFSE social workers' role and contributes to the negative reputation of child welfare.

We support the concern that House Bill 1227 poses a higher standard of removal that could lead to an increase in fatalities and near fatalities related to neglect.

We also understand that it is reported that social workers are holding caseloads between 20-80, when the maximum should be 12. Inadequate pay, lack of promotional opportunities, wellness and trauma supports, and degree supports have resulted in high social worker turnover. This turnover is greatly impacting the continuity of care that the children and families are receiving. As a result of the concerns outlined above, as well as for several other issues, the 1624 representatives stand in support of the WFSE DCYF members vote of no confidence for DCYF Secretary Ross Hunter.

Thank you,

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Mary Robinson, 1624 rep for region 1
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