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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

MATT GALLIVAN, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
WARREN GUNNELS, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

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February 13, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Tikki Brown
Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families
444 Lafayette Road N.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Commissioner Brown:

I am writing regarding your letter dated February 5, 2026, responding to a January 8, 2026, letter sent to Governor Tim Walz by every member of the United States Senate Republican Leadership and Republican Conference. Unfortunately, your responses failed to address fundamental questions and to provide specific information requested about alleged widespread fraud in Minnesota's federally subsidized child care services, while glossing over the facts of well-documented and long-standing problems within the state's social services programs.

Specifically, "Response 2" did not indicate whether any of the providers identified as high-risk received Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), and Head Start or Early Head Start Funding. Additionally, "Response 9" in your letter cited Minn. Stat. Sec. 13.46; 2 CFR 200.303, in an apparent attempt to deny access to certain requested information and records. The statute in question specifically states, however:

Subd. 2. General. (a) Data on individuals collected, maintained, used, or disseminated by the welfare system . . . shall not be disclosed except:

. . . .

(4) to an agent or investigator acting on behalf of . . . the federal government
(*emphasis added*).¹

It further includes a specific exception for the disclosure of data:

(6) to administer federal funds or programs (*emphasis added*).²

¹ MINN. STAT. § 13.462 (a)(4) (2025).

² MINN. STAT. § 13.462 (a)(6) (2025).

As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP), I view seriously my legislative oversight responsibility to fight fraud and abuse within federal child care programs under the Committee's jurisdiction. Therefore, I am reiterating our prior request for detailed documentation for all providers receiving federal child care funds from the state of Minnesota since January 1, 2018, including attendance records, licenses, inspection and monitoring reports, complaints, and investigations. This request is submitted in my role as Chairman and is subject to the applicable rules of the Senate and the HELP Committee related to confidentiality of records.

Further, your incomplete responses to our letter of January 8, 2026, also raised the following questions:

1. Please provide documentation that shows the total numbers of child care centers operating in Minnesota since January 1, 2018. In your response, please provide the numbers of a) licensed child care centers, b) certified child care centers, and c) family child care centers.
2. **“Response 1”**: Please provide the number of additional site visits for Child Care Assistance Programs (CCAP) providers conducted by Minnesota's Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Office of Inspector General (OIG) between December 29, 2025, and January 25, 2026.
 - a. Please provide names, descriptions (including numbers of children and staff), and funding amounts for the 100 highest-funded CCAP centers since January 1, 2018, broken down by provider type i.e., a) licensed child care centers, b) certified child care centers, and c) family child care centers.
 - b. How many stop payments has the DCYF OIG issued since December 29, 2025? Please provide a numerical number.
 - c. Please explain the criteria used to disqualify a provider suspected of intentional fraud from participating in CCAP and all state programs.
 - d. How many stop payments did DCYF OIG issue between January 1, 2018, and December 29, 2025?
 - i. How many of these providers were disqualified from participating in CCAP and all other state programs?
 - ii. Please provide total dollar amounts recouped for credible instances of fraud from January 1, 2018, and December 29, 2025.
 - e. Please provide a status update as well as intermediate findings from DCYF OIG's review of over 45,000 records collected during unannounced visits.

- f. Your response stated, “DCYF views compliance and program integrity as an ongoing requirement of our programs, thus there is no timeline end to DCYF’s work to monitor and investigated CCAP compliance.”
 - i. Please provide an estimate timeline for DCYF’s audits of the 100 highest-funded CCAP centers.
 - ii. In light of widespread allegations of fraud in Minnesota’s CCAP, please describe DCYF’s short- and long-term risk assessment plans, including plans to triage or prioritize funding streams and/or provider types to determine worst offenders.
3. **“Response 2”:** Please describe the method for conducting “yearly eligibility verification for families, including verifying the number of children receiving child care, and parental employment and income.”
- a. Please describe the “comprehensive process” used to evaluate, register, and license CCAP providers.
 - b. Given the anticipated roll out of new electronic attendance record-keeping system in June 2026, please explain how attendance records are currently submitted by child care providers.
 - c. Please provide a copy of the 2019 report commissioned by Governor Walz on possible electronic record keeping process.
4. **“Response 3”:** Please provide the numbers of licensed child care centers broken down by county.
- a. Please describe “program integrity activities” undertaken by counties with licensed child care centers and resulting enforcement actions resulting therefrom.
 - b. Please describe DCYF’s reporting requirements for counties with licensed child care centers, including required trainings and audits.
 - c. Please explain how many “fraud-related concerns” were referred to DCYF program integrity investigators by DCYF licensing staff conducting unannounced site visits to licensed child care centers from January 1, 2018.
 - d. Since January 1, 2018, how many additional unannounced visits were made to certified centers to investigate alleged certification requirement concerns?
 - i. How many of these visits uncovered legitimate certification concerns? Please explain the types of certification concerns that were identified.

- e. Please describe the licensing requirements to operate a) licensed child care center, b) certified child care center, and c) family child care center in the state of Minnesota.
5. **“Response 4:”** Please provide a categorical breakdown of the 1,042 CCAP investigations opened (i.e., random audits, tips and referrals, cases identified by data mining, and concerns raised through the Early and Often (E&O) program) since 2019.
- a. How many of the 1,042 CCAP investigations opened since 2019 involved intentional fraud? In each case of intentional fraud, please provide case summaries, including the outcomes, any resulting enforcement actions, and recoupment dollar amounts.
 - b. Please provide a categorical breakdown of the 426 administrative sanctions issued since 2019, including Orders of Corrective Action, Disqualification, and discontinued payments.
 - c. Please provide reports of the 46 CCAP cases referred to the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) for criminal investigation, including the name of the provider, provider type, number of staff and children, reason(s) for referral, and funding stream(s) involved.
 - i. Please provide the number of referrals to BCA which were incidents of “confirmed” fraud from a) an administrative and b) a criminal standard of proof.
 - ii. Please provide details on the status of these investigations and any enforcement actions. Please provide unredacted copies of records and case summaries.
 - d. Please explain state and county eligibility verification processes for “establishing the need for care and identity of both CCAP recipients and providers,” including verification procedures for identity, employment, and income.
 - e. Please describe the continued eligibility requirements, if any, for CCAP providers by provider type.
 - f. How many audits of the CCAP have been conducted since January 1, 2018? Please provide unredacted copies of all audit reports.
6. **“Response 5:”** In light of extensive legislative changes enacted by Minnesota legislature since 2018, under Governor Walz’ leadership, which has supported greater oversight, please explain ongoing allegations of fraud in CCAP.
- a. What evaluations or assessments, if any, has DCYF launched to assess the impact, including strengths and weaknesses, of legislative initiatives enacted since 2018

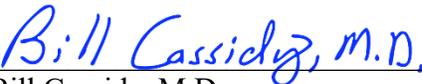
(provided in Appendix A of your response)? What were the findings and outcomes of these evaluations or assessments? Please provide unredacted copies of all evaluations and assessment reports.

- b. Please provide a list of providers penalized for “failing to report decreases in attendance” under Minn. Stat. §§ 119B.13, subd. 6(d)(7) & 142E.17, subd. 9(d)(7)) since 2019.
 - c. Please provide a list of licenses suspended for providers “criminally charged with an offense that involves fraud or theft against a program administered by the [Minnesota] Department of Human Services” under Minn. Stat. §§ 245A.07, subd. 2(a)(3) & 142B.18, subd. 2(a)(3)) since 2019.
 - d. Please describe the “expanded appeal rights” available to “providers if the Department of Human Services takes actions against them” under Minn. Stat. §§ 119B.16, 119B.161, 142E.18, & 142E.19.
 - e. Under Minn. Stat. §§ 119B.13, subd. 6(d) & 142E.17, subd. 9(d) for how many providers has the Minnesota Department of Human Services stopped or ended payments based on a provider’s non-compliance to certified centers since 2021?
 - f. Please provide dollar amounts forfeited by providers and “held by the Department of Human Services due to an investigation . . . upon a determination of fraud or termination from the program” since 2021 under Minn. Stat. §§ 119B.13, subd. 6(d) & 142E.17, subd. 9(d)).
7. **“Response 6:”** In light of extensive legislative changes enacted by Minnesota legislature since 2018, under Governor Walz’ leadership, which has supported greater oversight, please explain the 11 percent attendance and payment error rate indicated in the May 2025 Department of Health and Human Services OIG report.
- a. Please provide a breakdown of the anomalies, emerging fraud trends, and high-risk areas revealed by DCYF Compliance Office’s comprehensive risk management system, Riskconnect since July 1, 2024.
 - i. Please provide unredacted copies of these analytics.
 - ii. What responsive actions has DCYF taken to these analytics?
8. **“Response 7:”** What were the outcomes of the follow-up investigations conducted by DCYF in response to overpayment issues identified by the May 2025 HHS OIG audit?
- a. Please provide the dollar amounts recovered by category i.e., voluntary repayment; deduction or withholding program payments; and legal collection processes, including referral to the Department of Revenue for tax offset.

- b. How many “suspicious billing records” were identified as a result of DCYF’s unannounced monitoring site-visits since January 1, 2018?
- i. What responsive action(s) were taken by the state against providers submitting “suspicious billing records?”
 - ii. Were these providers required to reimburse the state for overbilling? If not, why not?

Please respond with the information requested, on a question-by-question basis, no later than **Friday, February 27, 2026**. I ask that all requested documents be unredacted and Bates stamped. If you do not provide sufficient answers and documentation requested in this letter, the Committee will seek other means for securing your cooperation.

Sincerely,


Bill Cassidy, M.D.
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor, and Pensions

cc: Governor Tim Walz