From: Spilka, Karen (SEN) [Karen.E.Spilka@state.ma.us]
Sent: Friday, October 12, 2007 12:01 PM
To: ideasnpo@comcast.net; Spilka, Karen (SEN); Donato, Paul - Rep. (HOU)
Subject: RE: Troubled Kids, Trouble System

Dear Tami,

Thank you for sending this information along. It would great if you could testify at the Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities hearing we will be having regarding CHINS on November 14. It will be held in Gardiner Auditorium at the State House at 10:30 a.m.

It would be interesting if you could raise the issue about spending that you mentioned below, as well as your success rate.

Please contact my office by phone at (617) 722-1640 if you have questions.

Regards,
Karen Spilka

From: ideasnpo@comcast.net [mailto:ideasnpo@comcast.net]
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2007 2:27 PM
To: Spilka, Karen (SEN); Donato, Paul - Rep. (HOU)
Subject: Troubled Kids, Trouble System

Dear Sen. Spilka and Rep. Donato,

Recently, in the Patriot Ledger an article regarding the above-mentioned title stated that you were try to reform the CHINS.

I am an advocate for children with disabilities. Many of my clients are diagnosed with social/emotional and behavioral disorders. All of my clients are receiving services through our troubled system. We are a nonprofit organization dedicated to securing the appropriate services for children with disabilities.

Over the last two years we have represented approximately 60 children on the South Shore. Our organization is very very small and as you know we are all cash poor, but it does not stop us from assisting families and their children.

During the last two years, I have found that there are numerous services available, but what I have also found is that every state agency and/or nonprofit receiving funds from a state agency cries poor whenever a family is in need of services.

What we have done is learn how to navigate the system. Sometimes that means to utilize due process in all of the agencies that are involved. When this happens, the agencies all seem to find the funds to provide to the family before we even enter into a hearing.

I guess what I'm trying to tell you is that there are plenty of resources available throughout Massachusetts, but it appears to me that the employees of the agencies are more interested in saving a buck than in trying to save the child from a bleak future without the appropriate services.

At IDEAS we have a 100% success rate. Success in securing the services for our children and in the outcome of the benefit of the service.

We would like the opportunity to assist more families in Massachusetts but we cannot. We can prove our record through various state documents and parents of the children we have represented. They will be more than happy to speak to you regarding their fight prior to getting IDEAS involved and the results we accomplished in just a few months, usually at the first meeting.

Please call us for more information at 508-386-3593.

Thank you,
Tami Joia, President

Oh, we are in the midst of a fight regarding custody with DSS. We have prevented them from a Care and Protection Order, but DSS has threatened that if they do not receive full custody they will pull funding of the residential placement of the two children, even though they have signed 3 separate contracts stating they will continue to fund until 2008. As a matter of fact, in court transcripts, the judge specifically asks the question is the issue before him "cost-share", both attorney's stated yes. DSS stated that they would have an answer as to if DSS can continue funding the residential if they do not have full custody. This answer was suppose to be delivered to the Judge by June 6, 2007. As of this date they have not. But, according to the federal regulations regarding children with disabilities and the "Obligation of a Public Agency", it states their responsibility clearly. This argument will be brought before the judge sometime in Decem ber.

If you are interested in more of this story please call me at the number listed above. The family is more than happy to speak to you.