



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives

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Patrick Administration Shifts Blame to Courts

Boston – Representatives Marc Lombardo (R-Billerica) and Jim Lyons (R-Andover) report that they have received several responses from the Patrick administration regarding their inquiries into the Justina Pelletier case.

In an April 1, 2014 letter to the House Republican Caucus, Governor Patrick stated that, “DCF does not have the authority to determine when and if custody should be returned to Justina’s parents; that authority is held solely by the court.”

“This is exactly the type of response that has become typical of Governor Patrick over the last several months. He obfuscates the issue by blaming the courts at the same time that his administration continues to utilize the 51A process to trample on the constitutionally protected rights of these parents,” commented Lyons.

On April 2, 2014 Representatives Lombardo and Lyons met with Secretary of Health and Human Services John Polanowicz and members of his staff. A summary of the major points of the meeting has been attached.

“The Patrick administration had no evidence to substantiate their position that the Pelletiers were unfit to care for their child,” said Lyons. “Further, the Patrick administration appeared to have no understanding of the

agreed upon motion filed on March 17, 2014 and the administration appears to have no plans to reunite this family.”

“It is time for this tragedy to come to an end. We know that the Pelletiers love their daughter, and this family has suffered enough. It’s time for Governor Patrick to step up, show some humility, and admit the wrong that has been done to Justina and her family,” said Representative Lombardo. “Please call Governor Patrick and demand that the Pelletier family be reunited.”

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Major Points of Meeting between Secretary Polanowicz and Representatives Lyons and Lombardo

April 2, 2014 – State House

The Secretary began the meeting by stating that the goal of the Department of Children and Families was reuniting the Pelletier’s in Connecticut.

Representatives Lombardo and Lyons then asked the following questions:

1. Would you please provide any information that the Department of Children and Families had in February of 2013 that indicated that the Pelletier’s were unfit to care for their daughter?

Answer: The administration did not provide any evidence at the meeting or in the course of our follow ups indicating that the Pelletiers were unfit.

2. Why did the Department of Children and Families object to the March 17, 2014 motion agreed upon by Justina Pelletier’s attorney, Nancy Hathaway, and Justina Pelletier’s parents that sought to restore custodial care to the Pelletier family?

Answer: The representatives of Health and Human Services that were at the meeting stated they were unaware of the agreed upon motion that was filed on March 17, 2014.

3. What do the Pelletiers have to do to get their child back? Will your representatives provide a pathway to reunification?

Answer: While the administration said yes, to date no information has been provided.

On Wednesday, April 2, 2013, several hours after our meeting with secretary Polanowicz, a proposal from Lou and Linda Pelletier was e-mailed to the Secretary. As of today there has been no response from the Patrick administration.