



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

207 STATE HOUSE
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

JB PRITZKER
GOVERNOR

March 4, 2019

Dear Chairwoman Feigenholtz, Vice Chairwoman Ramirez, Spokesperson Sommer and Members of the Adoption & Child Welfare Committee:

Protecting Illinois' most vulnerable children is a responsibility that my administration takes very seriously, and we welcome the oversight that this committee will provide for this critical work in the weeks, months and years ahead. It is my firm belief that bringing attention and resources to issues of child abuse and neglect must be part of the solution so that Illinois can do a better job keeping children safe when their families are in crisis.

The Acting Inspector General's annual report, released on Jan. 1, details deeply troubling findings, and my office is committed to preventing these profound tragedies. The death of any child is devastating; when a child who has been involved in the DCFS system dies, we must review all interactions to ensure that we learn from what happened. DCFS has taken several initial steps to address some of the IG's findings; among the steps DCFS has taken are: reducing caseloads, implementing new technology, collaborating with the Department of Human Services to provide critical services that support children and families, and moving higher-risk cases back to DCFS from private agencies. DCFS is approaching these investments as a first step, and we hope to work with your committee as well as other stakeholders and advocates on other investments, strategies and priorities in the coming weeks.

Additionally, adequately funding DCFS services will be a major priority, and in my initial budget proposal, my administration included funding for 126 additional frontline staff and technology upgrades after years of budget constraints. In addition, we know that prevention services will be key to helping children and their families. Funding social services will also be an ongoing priority, and my budget proposal included increases for human service agencies that have been hollowed out by the previous administration.



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Last week, members of my team, including Deputy Governor Sol Flores, had an initial meeting with the IG to begin to understand the complex and important issues raised in her report. These conversations will continue.

Finally, I want to reiterate my lifelong commitment to helping our youngest, most vulnerable children. Getting this work right is at the core of my personal values, and at the core of our values as a state.

I look forward to our partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB Pritzker", written in a stylized, cursive script.

JB Pritzker
Governor, State of Illinois