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Appeals court throws out case against four social workers in Gabriel Fernandez case

THE COURT AGREES: WE NEED STRUCTURAL REFORM – NOT SCAPEGOATING – TO KEEP LA COUNTY CHILDREN SAFE!

In a major victory for LA County Children's Social Workers fighting to improve child safety, Justices with the California 2nd District Court of Appeal on January 6 threw out the case against four former DCFS Children's Social Workers who faced criminal charges in the death of 8-year-old Gabriel Fernandez.

Gabriel died tragically in 2013 at the hands of his mother and her boyfriend, who will likely spend the rest of their lives in prison for his murder. The case brought renewed media attention to systemic problems at LA County DCFS that SEIU 721 CSWs have fought for years to address.

The Gabriel Fernandez case was an unspeakable tragedy. Together with County leadership, we have the power to ensure it never happens again. Here's what our union is doing to improve child safety:

STOPPING THE REVOLVING DOOR WITH MENTORSHIP AND RETENTION PROGRAMS

SEIU 721 fought for and won a systemwide mentorship program that pairs every new CSW with a mentor during the first year on the job. This program helped reduce DCFS' alarmingly high 40 percent turnover rate to just 6 percent in its first year.

REDUCING EXCESSIVE CASELOADS WITH NEW HIRES AND CASELOAD CAPS

SEIU 721 has fought for and won the hiring of nearly 4,000 new CSWs since 2013 and earlier this year negotiated mandatory caseload caps, including a maximum of 45 cases for AP/MMS and 55 cases for CMS.

RECRUITING MORE HIGH QUALITY FOSTER PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SEIU 721 fought for and hosted Child Placement Forums to identify and recruit more high quality placement opportunities and increase accountability among group providers.

SEIU 721 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORKERS: IMPROVING CHILD SAFETY IN LA COUNTY BY WINNING THE TOOLS WORKERS NEED

For more information, contact SEIU Member Connection at (877) 721-4YOU (4968)



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