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September 24, 2015

The Honorable Nikki Haley
c/o Katherine Veldran, Director of Legislative Affairs
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor Haley,

I have been a Guardian ad Litem in Greenville County for 5 years. I have always visited the children in my care at least once a month and have worked hard to represent their best interests in court. Currently, I have three cases: a child in a residential treatment facility 228 miles away, a child who was in a residential treatment facility 79 miles away and then moved to another 118 miles away before finally returning home, and a child in a therapeutic foster home 104 miles away.

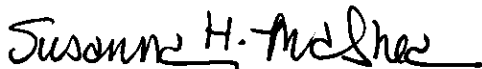
Because of the distances involved it is difficult if not impossible for me to devote the time, care and attention to these children that they deserve. That is also true for DSS caseworkers who struggle with excessive case loads far greater than mine.

The truth is that DSS cannot find enough foster homes or residential facilities in Greenville County. As a result, children are placed hours away, far from family and those responsible for their well being. So Guardians ad Litem quit, DSS caseworkers burn out, and the children are in danger. It is an impossible situation.

In addition, the remote placements of children cause enormous expense in time and gas required for DSS caseworkers to visit multiple far-flung children and for those children to be transported to Greenville County for family visits.

I wish I had solutions to this pressing problem and to the constellation of other inefficiencies that plague the bureaucratic foster care system. I don't yet but am willing to work with your team to make the system better.

Sincerely,



Susanna H. McShea

cc: Senator Katrina Frye Shealy, DSS Oversight Committee, SC Legislature
Bill Fox, The Greenville News
Mark Lett, The State