

September 12, 2014

The Honorable Jay Lucas
Interim Speaker of the House of Representatives
State House, Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Speaker:

News this week that five children from Lexington County were killed by their father and left on the side of the road is an unspeakable, horrific tragedy.

We have since learned that the South Carolina Department of Social Services had previously investigated the father who allegedly killed his five children.

According to news reports, the father was again investigated by DSS caseworkers following reports of child abuse less than a month before they were found dead.

Our state government has a fundamental responsibility to prevent tragedies like this from happening over and over again. The first priority of DSS is to keep our most vulnerable children safe from harm by abusive parents.

From 2011-2013, 251 South Carolina children have died while under DSS control during Governor Haley's watch.

We know that number is higher today, but Governor Haley has refused to release the number of child fatalities during 2014.

I am requesting that you reconvene the General Assembly to address the leadership void at DSS.

I am asking the legislature to put partisan politics aside and pass a joint resolution authorizing appropriate legal action against Governor Haley and her DSS cabinet appointee to shift control of the agency to an

independent administrator to be appointed by a court of competent jurisdiction.

The independent administrator should be given full authority to conduct a thorough investigation of DSS practices and procedures and to implement any recommendations that may come from the Legislative Audit Council Report that is soon to be released.

Sincerely,

Tom Ervin

cc: Sen. Tom Young, Jr., Sen. Joel Lourie, Sen. Katrina Shealy