



Kathleen Sebelius, Governor
Don Jordan, Secretary

www.srskansas.org

June 17, 2008

Some individuals have taken a few poorly considered comments I made for their own purposes, stretching my comments far beyond anything I know or believe. First let me make clear that I do not know of or believe there has been an instance where an assistant county or district attorney has asked or demanded that a SRS social worker commit perjury or misrepresent the facts of a situation.

Child welfare cases are some of the most emotional situations professionals are asked to address. At times the emotion and stress can lead to a lack of civility. This can happen in various places and it was never my intention to imply it has only ever happened in Sedgwick County. In fact, one of the aspects of my comments which I most deeply regret is that they did not recognize the great strides which have been made in Sedgwick County, through the leadership of Nola Foulston, to improve the professionalism and civility of the interactions among various participants in the child welfare system. That I failed to acknowledge this does not contribute to what Ms Foulston is trying to achieve and I will have to work hard to repair this breach.

The disputes I was referring to in my comments and for which I was not clear, have nothing to do with the veracity of the information provided in legal documents. Rather, there are at times disputes over what facts are relevant to the case at hand in assessing a child's current safety. In these situations professionals, all dedicated to doing their best to keep a child safe, can disagree about what factors should be considered and the correct course of action. Ultimately, it is up to the juvenile court judges to mediate these disputes and through their fact finding, make the right decisions.

The basis for my comments were anecdotal accounts provided to me over the years by line social workers and their managers. These were not specific to Sedgwick County, but were about many jurisdictions in Kansas over this time period. I have been asked for specific allegations so these can be validated or refuted. I do not have any such specific information. Rather these are an accumulation of concerns expressed to me over a number of years. In hearing these concerns I have never been told a social worker was asked to violate any laws. To be clear, I have no reason to believe the Sedgwick County District Attorney or her staff has ever been anything other than ethical and legal in their handling of cases.

Finally, much has been made that I told Ron Paschal that I was pandering when I made these comments. In attempting to bridge our differences with Citizens for Change by demonstrating empathy toward their situations, I discussed a topic with them that should have been between the officials involved and me. That it fed their worst suspicions about the child welfare system reinforced what a poor decision it was.



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SRS is dedicated to strengthening our relationships with all the professionals working every day to make Kansas a safer place and I hope that we can put this episode to rest and positively discuss what actions are needed to make Kansas children safer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Jordan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Don Jordan
 Secretary, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services