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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JOHN KIVELA
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

April 5, 2017

Honorable Governor Rick Snyder
Romney Building
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Honorable Governor Snyder,

Today, I write to alert you to an ongoing issue occurring in my district. For months I have been working with Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) officials in efforts to address what I feel is a crisis situation in the Marquette DHHS office due to what appears to be a severe hostile work environment. However, as of today, I am aware of no actions that have occurred.

Recently, I have been working with Steve Yager, Terry Beurer, and Karla Ruest from DHHS. We have met both in Lansing and in Marquette (March 10, 2017). During the Marquette meeting, we held an open meeting with all front line employees from the DHHS office, plus 3 individual meetings. The individual meetings were held with one former employee, one current employee and one current supervisor. A common theme shared in the 3 individual meetings, group meeting and in ensuing meetings were stories of employee intimidation, bullying, sexual harassment, and an office with an overall hostile work environment created by management. Employees also shared with us concerns over official records manipulation and other legal violations. Without going into specific details, I can say that I was honestly disgusted with the conditions they were forced to work under, and as a state representative I held myself accountable to fix the situation. I have no doubt that if you were in the Marquette meetings you would agree that immediate and aggressive action must be taken.

Now nearly a month after the Marquette meeting there has been no action taken. I continue to have multiple employees calling and emailing me weekly asking for help. These are state employees that are in tears, terrified to even share their names with me as they fear repercussions for bringing their struggles to light. I can no longer wait patiently and hope for changes to be made. It is because of my strong belief that changes must happen that I am contacting you Governor Snyder and imploring your office to look into the Marquette DHHS office situation.

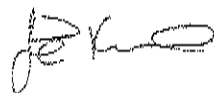
As you know from the countless projects we have worked on together, I prefer to focus on results and not rhetoric. Because of this I have chosen to work quietly behind the scenes with DHHS officials to investigate the issues that were brought to my office. However, I have become increasingly frustrated by the lack of any action. After weeks of being told to be patient while they continue to look into this situation, I will wait no longer.

In hearing the countless stories of what appears to be harassment, bullying, and intimidation of both current and former employees, it is my belief that the immediate termination of regional leadership is the only acceptable solution to this problem. The environment in the Marquette DHHS office is toxic due to the current leadership in the region and no employee in the state of Michigan should have to deal with these conditions.

Again, I ask that your office look into the Marquette DHHS office. I have no doubt that you will share my belief that changes need to be made. I look forward to your office's participation in addressing these concerns. Please know that I am available at your earliest convenience to discuss these concerns with you in further details.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,



John Kivela
State Representative
109th House District

cc: Brian Calley, Lieutenant Governor
Nick Lyons, Director Michigan Department of Human Services
Tom Casperson, State Senator, 38th Senate District