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VIA EMAIL

May 20, 2024

Lieutenant Governor Kristen Juras
State Capitol, Room 204
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-1901

Re: DEMAND TO CEASE & DESIST

Dear Kristen:

As you know, I represent Todd Kolstad and Krista Cummins-Kolstad in matters relating to the illegal seizure of their 15-year-old daughter by CPS. It has come to our attention that, for the past several months, you have been making false and defamatory statements about the Kolstads to people across Montana. Specifically, you have said that CPS's seizure of the Kolstads' daughter was lawful and have repeatedly accused the Kolstads of lying about their daughter's seizure. You have it exactly backwards – it is *your* statements about the Kolstads that are unfounded, malicious, and slanderous under Montana law. We demand that you (1) immediately cease defaming the Kolstads, (2) apologize for slandering them, and (3) preserve all written communications between you and any other person relating to the Kolstads.

I. Facts Concerning CPS's Unlawful Seizure of the Kolstads' Daughter

CPS workers testified in an affidavit that they seized the Kolstads' daughter and sent her to a Wyoming psychiatric facility because she was facing "imminent risk of physical harm" and her parents "refused to sign paperwork to allow her to get psychiatric care." As detailed in the complaint we just filed in federal court (*Kolstad v. Baillargeon et at*, Cause No. CV 24-0055-BLG-SPW), CPS's statements were lies. When CPS workers seized the Kolstads' daughter on the evening of August 22, 2023, she was in a Glasgow hospital where she was receiving 24-hour, one-to-one observation and, according to her physician, was "not an active threat to self." She was scheduled to be transferred to Billings Clinic Psychiatric Center in Billings on the following day.

CPS workers knew all of this and had even arranged to transport the Kolstads' daughter to Billings. The Kolstads objected to the daughter's placement in Wyoming solely based on their religious objection to Wyoming allowing transgender "care" to be performed on minors without parental consent. When a Wyoming facility became available on August 22, and the Kolstads insisted on their daughter being transferred to Billings as agreed upon by CPS, CPS workers instead seized the Kolstads' daughter and took her to Wyoming against her parents' will. CPS did this because they believed the Kolstads' objections to transgenderism made them unfit parents. They told the Kolstads that their daughter would not be returned to them until they accepted her transgenderism. When the Kolstads refused to compromise their faith, CPS workers took their daughter to her biological mother in Canada. These actions were in clear violation of both federal and state law, as detailed in the complaint attached to this letter.

II. Your Defamation of the Kolstads

On January 8, 2024, the Kolstads sent you an email with a detailed timeline explaining the injustice being inflicted upon them. They wrote to you because every other governmental institution had failed them.

On January 29, 2024, Governor Gianforte stated on social media that "Consulting with the director of DPHHS and personally examining case documents, Lieutenant Governor Juras has concluded that DPHHS and the court have followed state policy and the law in their handling of this tragic case." The case documents, however, demonstrate precisely the opposite. You and Governor Gianforte could have stopped this injustice, but instead you allowed CPS to trample on the Kolstads' civil rights and illegally remove their daughter to Canada on February 4, 2024.

Rather than respond to the Kolstads' plea for help (or refrain from saying anything at all about their case), you have chosen to slander them for the past several months by calling them "liars" and claiming that CPS was justified in seizing their daughter. And you have made these accusations to individuals across Montana. As a result, the Kolstads demand that you:

1) Cease and desist defaming them;
2) Issue a public apology for defaming them; and
3) Preserve all written communications between you and any other person concerning or relating to Todd Kolstad, Krista Cummins-Kolstad, or their daughter.

In addition to preserving documents, records, and data, we demand that you immediately take affirmative steps to prevent anyone with access to documents, records, and data relevant to the Kolstads from hiding, modifying, or destroying them. I can be reached at (406) 570-2949 if you have any questions regarding this letter.

Respectfully,

Matthew G. Monforton
MGM:dm