

Letters to the Editor: Aug. 14, 2017

System fails children

It is heartbreaking to learn that yet a third child in our state's foster care system has ended her life by hanging herself within the last year. The tragedies of teens like Giulianna Ramos Bermudez, Lauryn Martin-Everett and Naika Venant show us that privatization of the child welfare system has done little to improve the welfare of Florida's children.

Under our current system, the state Department of Children and Families assigns the care of children to contractors, who frequently subcontract and employ other third-party contractors to administer care, provide residential placements and address the therapeutic needs of these children. This system of hiring private contractors to oversee foster care in much of the state has frequently led to insufficient therapeutic placements, physical and emotional abuse, and, sadly, death for too many of our children. We're seeing kids who just aren't in the right kinds of placements or receiving the right kind of services, ultimately falling through the cracks.

How many more children must we lose before the state makes critically needed changes to its failed experiment with privatization and outsourcing of child welfare services?

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