



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1440
TTY: (207) 287-4469

Russell P. White

59 Addie Rd.

Ellsworth, ME 04605

(207) 460-6359

Russell.White@legislature.maine.gov

August 28, 2025

The Honorable Craig V. Hickman, Senate Chair
The Honorable Anne-Marie Mastraccio, House Chair
Government Oversight Committee
82 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0082

Dear Senator Hickman and Representative Mastraccio:

Upon review of correspondence produced by Betsey Grant, owner of Tiny Tikes Daycare, I request that the Government Oversight Committee investigate the possibility of active and ongoing retaliation by the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as the Department of Education. It is Ms. Grant's belief that this retaliation is the direct result of her testifying before your committee on the subject of discrimination of foster children by the State and the mishandling of federal funds.

Enclosed you will find two letters that raise a significant level of concern. One pertaining to Ms. Grant's security standards and child well-being policies that reportedly resulted in an unlawful sanctioning of her childcare license for over two years by the Office of Child and Family Services. The second letter from Ms. Grant, to the U.S. Department of Justice, speaks to her loss of federal food program funding from the Department of Education.

Your time and attention to this matter are appreciated. With childcare being an essential service to our communities, I am sure you agree that the overall welfare of our precious little ones should be one of policymakers'/overseers' highest priorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. White", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Russell P. White
State Representative

Enclosure(s)

TINY TIKES DAYCARE

Betsey Grant

163 Bar Harbor Road

Trenton, Maine 04640

License # 424615

(207) 812-1065

betseygrant1@icloud.com

March 29, 2025

Bobbi Johnson, Director of OCFS

John Feeney, Chief Operating Officer OCFS

Janet Whitten, Childcare Licensing & Investigations Manager

Department of Health and Human Services

11 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Ms. Johnson, Mr. Feeney, and Ms. Whitten,

I am writing to ask for clarity on my childcare license which has expired today.

I have been inspected 63 times since 2003, and have never had a sanctioned license until I began speaking up loudly and publicly regarding childcare subsidy payments being mishandled, investigations of child abuse being ignored and then retaliation towards the mandated reporter by the Department and the lack of security standards in Maine childcare settings.

On September 3, 2024, the four of us met in person to discuss the inaccuracies and the

baselessness of violations that Investigator Cogger and Fitzgerald cited on my childcare program. As a result of this intentionally incompetent investigation my license was sanctioned on April 19, 2023. This is the first time in the history of Maine's Childcare Licensing that a childcare provider has been sanctioned without a substantiated or even indicated claim of child abuse and neglect.

Investigator Cogger also handled my bribery investigation on July 21, 2021, and found violations that were erroneous, including a violation for an incomplete incident report on a mandated report of child abuse that I reported to a DHHS caseworker. Investigator Cogger's reasoning was that I did not have a parent signature on my Incident Report. This is a terrible showing of the ability to understand, follow and enforce mandated reporter rights and responsibilities by the OCFS. OCFS/DHHS staff should never require mandated reporters to break CAPTA statutes and put their own safety at risk by instructing us to retrieve a signature from the parent that we reported on for suspected child endangerment.

I reported this incident and several other incidents of misconduct by Investigator Cogger in several emails to this Office of Child and Family Services and met in person on October 27, 2021, with John Feeney and Janet Whitten. The false violations from Cogger's Investigation were not removed and my right to have an informal dispute resolution was denied and my letter of refute was not addressed in its entirety by Licensing & Investigations Office Manager, Janet Whitten.

Inaccurate violations that I received from this 2021 incompetent investigation that I have refused to change are:

- (1.) My security standards (2.) My minor injury documentation and communication with parents procedure and (3.) My policy for maintaining ratios.

The active ignoring of my reports of child abuse and endangerment combined with the

disregard for accuracy for my licensing violations led to me filing a formal ADA Civil Rights complaint on Investigator Cogger and other specific DHHS staff members. I filed this complaint on December 18, 2021.

The Civil Rights Coordinator opened an investigation on Investigator Cogger on the grounds of **whistleblower retaliation** on March 1, 2023, and closed it on April 9, 2023. Investigator Cogger should not have been assigned to my Cupcake investigation on January 24, 2023, which she **then** closed on April 19, 2023, **due to the obvious conflict of interest**.

Impartiality did not exist whereas I am under a hostile investigation (again) by the very Investigator under her own investigation due to my complaint on her. There is an appearance of impropriety by OCFS/DHHS to cite me for violations that I have never been cited for prior nor have I been cited for in the 20 consecutive monthly inspections since my "Sanctioning of License".

To be clear, these are the issues that I refuse to comply with:

- * I will continue to designate a **separate bathroom** for staff/visitors/adults from the bathroom children use for diapering, potty training and other private personal needs the children may have.

- * I will not change my incident reporting system

- * I will not change any of my security standards

- * I will not change my fitted sheets that are superior to elastic fitted sheets

- * I will always make sure my staff knows who every child's name is and who every child's parents are. **This is not a violation of confidentiality to have all staff know who all**

the children are and to what family they belong to, in fact it is a necessary security standard.

***I will not change my supervised visitor form and procedure for foster children's safety**

***I will not change my trainings for staff and will continue to use the word "coddle"**
And when describing how to handle conflict resolution I will use the words "victim, criminal, by-stander"..... These trainings not only have been accepted by DHHS licensing for decades, they are still accepted by current licensing inspectors as I have emailed them several times for approval since 2018, and I have all parents read and sign they understand and to which parents enjoy that we at Tiny Tikes have such clearly defined code of conduct. The word "coddle" is described in many scholarly sources and I have used it appropriately in my staff training manual.

***I will not notify any person, parent, guardian if my staff or if I feel the need to report a child endangerment report to DHHS/CPS, and I will not ask the person of concern for their signature. I will train my staff to follow up on any child abuse/endangerment reports to also make a police report in case our reports are ignored or not assigned.**

I have sent in my renewal application to this OCFS and on March 25, 2025, the State licensing inspectors came to do the renewal inspection at my childcare. We had four minor violations which were corrected on sight and one violation which is common among the childcare industry which was the letter of eligibility not being in a staff file due to the state not able to send these letters directly to the childcare provider as well as the Individual staff member.

I did not sign my renewal application, and I will not sign it until these incriminating false violations are removed from my record with a letter of apology and the reasoning from the

advisory board as to why sanctioning was in the public's best safety interest.

My life's work is to care for and support Maine's children and families. It is my right to be heard and responded to by the agency that holds my license. As a mandated reporter I have the right for my identity to not be revealed to the subject of my child endangerment reports, it is also against federal and state statutes to give a mandated reporter any penalty for "good faith reporting".

I reported a terminated rogue employee for violating confidentiality rules on January 12, 2023. I followed the 24-hour mandatory reporting requirement whereas the knowledge of her confidentiality breach came to me the evening prior on January 11, 2023, as well as new information regarding her recklessness with a firearm towards neighbors that was pending in court.

The fact that I was never interviewed regarding my report on January 12, 2023, shows a Clear disregard of my child safety concerns and then retaliation by OCFS DHHS whereas I received intentionally incorrect violations of having a firearm here at me childcare facility and for not reporting and a third violation for retaliation reporting.

These violations are appalling and show the DHHS's intension to defame my childcare's reputation to cover-up their own failure to act, failure to protect and failure to follow their own reporting, risk assessment and timely assigning of an investigation.

I will not sign my application renewal until I am given the fair opportunity to show the correspondence and timeline of my reporting child endangerment and the astonishing reason for getting the violations for making this serious child safety report.

On September 3, 2024, I was told by Director Bobbi Johnson that there would be no discussion on these violations whereas I petitioned for review in Superior court. On October 16, 2024, my case was dismissed not for lack of merit but because I did not

properly file for monetary value for remedy of relief. I simply asked for a letter of apology from DHHS and for my record to be corrected.

I will not sign my renewal application until these violations are discussed in detail and removed from my record. **I have the right to not be misrepresented publicly by the Office of Child and Family Services. I have the right for immunity for good faith reports of Child endangerment. I have the right for an impartial and thorough investigation, and I have the right to have a competent and impartial hearing officer. I was not assigned a fair hearing officer who knew childcare licensing rules without relying on the misguided interpretations of the rules from the DHHS investigators and inspector who had not been fully trained.**

On November 28, 2023, the assigned administrative hearing officer asked only the DHHS investigators about clarity on licensing rules that he did not understand but never asked me to clarify these rules in which I am more knowledgeable and experienced with.

The fact that Investigator Cogger did not use full disclosure at this administrative hearing regarding being under open investigation per my Human Rights complaint on her and she closed her open investigation on me 9 days after she was cleared and gave me an absurd amount of **never heard of before violations** combined with the **intentional omittance** of emails regarding my initial complaint of breeches of confidentiality and child endangerment with a reckless possession of a firearm by a former rogue employee supports my claim of a hostile work environment created by the DHHS as well as intimidation, retaliation, defamation, intentional infliction of emotional distress, collusion with a “bad faith” rogue mandated reporter (the employee breeching confidentiality) and the act of perjury at the hearing after taking an oath that all information was inclusive and truthful.

I look forward to a response from the Office of Child and Family Services regarding this

serious issue, the community that I serve has the right for quality childcares to receive fair treatment from the Department of Health and Human Services. It is in statute (10-148 CODE OF MAINE RULES CHAPTER 32) that DHHS must enforce compliance for licensed childcares. I have been communicating for seven years with DHHS that I will not comply with the misguidance of Licensing and Investigation Unit Manager to change my policies that not only go above the minimum requirements for child safety these policies I have developed should be implemented into rule for the well-being and safety of all families, children, staff and the public.

Now that my license has expired and has been sanctioned for almost two years, yet I still have not changed my policies I am awaiting to hear what the next step is by my Licensing Agency.

My inspectors have clearly stated to me and show in their 20 inspections since Cogger's unusual interpretation of my program, that I have not "come into compliance" but that I was "never out of compliance". This clearly shows that my program was treated differently than any other childcare licensed by OCFS in Maine.

Respectfully,

Betsey Grant & Tiny Tikes Daycare Family

TINY TIKES DAYCARE

Betsey Grant

15 Fairway Lane

Hancock, MAINE 04640

Attorney General Pam Bondi

U.S. Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW

Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Pam Bondi,

Please help me, I live in MAINE and I am being retaliated against by my state's Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education for a public testimony that I made at my state's capital building at a Government Oversight Committee hearing. I testified about the discrimination of foster children by the state of Maine's DHHS and the federal mishandling of these precious children's funding. I also testified that mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect are often ignored by Maine's Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection Unit , and then when the child is seriously injured or dies we (the mandated reporter) get blamed for not reporting. This is not only an abuse of power by my Governor's administration, it is a failure to protect our children. I am a licensed childcare provider with a Maine license to operate a childcare facility for 91 children. From 2019 to 2023 I was blessed to serve

59 state foster children. Some of these children were abused in state care by their caseworkers, and when I reported this abuse I received harassment and retaliation from Maine's DHHS by having these children's daycare federal funds withheld.

On March 10, 2023 I testified publicly at a Government Oversight Committee hearing while the leaders of DHHS sat behind me in the audience. My staff member sat behind them and heard them call me a liar and they chuckled and said my license will be fun to sanction. Within the month my childcare license was sanctioned and my foster children's money was withheld in the amount of \$30,000.00. I was then kicked off of the federal food program that supported my childcare program which is a loss of \$230,496.00. I was approved for a federal childcare expansion grant in the amount of \$75,000.00 and that funding was lost due to the unlawful sanctioning of my childcare license. It is against the Maine's statute to have my licensed sanction for more than a year, but I refuse to sign my renewal application whereas I will not comply to several "rules" the Maine DHHS is misguiding and forcing me to do. One rule of particular concern is my refusal to change my strict policy of not allowing **Adults/Visitors/Staff to share the same bathroom as my infants/toddlers/school age Children.**

Please help me fight my own Government in Maine so I can continue to teach, love, protect and nourish our children.

Retaliation is real here in MAINE, and my time is running out whereas I accept all low income subsidized families and my license has expired whereas I refused to sign my renewal application until my DHHS clarifies this bathroom security standard that I refuse

to change. I was also paid back the \$30,000.00 from DHHS but I was asked to change the signature date in order to avoid the DHHS from getting an audit finding.

I am blessed with this battle to protect children but I need help.

Resiliently,

Betsey Grant & Tiny Tikes Daycare Family