



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SUPERVISOR RIDLEY-THOMAS' STATEMENT  
REGARDING CEO'S REPORT ON OPTIONS TO  
ENHANCE COUNTY'S FAMILY CHILDREN'S INDEX**

"In August of last year I authored a motion directing the CEO, with the CIO and DCFS, to inform the board of the best possible options to enhance the County's Family and Children's Index (FCI).

I expect to receive that report tomorrow.

FCI is the data system that should enable social workers to rapidly gather information relevant to a child's safety from multiple government agencies. It has become horribly clear following recent child deaths that the system has not done its job.

For nearly two decades now, since the early 1990's, the Board has received reports that agencies lack the ability to share important, potentially life-saving data.

These include police reports, mental health records and past abuse reports.

Use of FCI has gone up, from fewer than 14,000 queries a month since my August motion, to more than 23,000 queries so far this month.

Although more people are using the County's FCI system now, that's not the top issue.

It's a matter of quality as well as quantity.

There are systems available – some in use in other parts of the country — that may be able to do the job required in LA County.

I'm often given lengthy lists of reasons why other systems won't work.

Instead, I'd like to move the dialogue to what works best, and how we make it work for us.

I'm now prepared to visit other jurisdictions to look for a better model. I will also invite those who think they have solutions to present them publicly.

We don't yet know what an effective working system will cost. It is a knee-jerk reaction and nothing more than misleading conjecture to say a new and improved system will cost \$100 million. The best way to thwart any reform is to say it costs too much before any attempt is made to find a solution.

Until somebody can tell me how much a child's life is worth we have to be sure we are considering every possible method to save our children.

This is the time to assess every tool we can to stop children from dying.”

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