

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
AND MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH**

November 15, 2016

**Improving Oversight of the Children’s Special Investigations Unit**

With the focus on improving child welfare, the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) authorized a number of changes in programs to support the safety and well-being of children in the County’s charge. Several motions have sought to enhance analysis and coordinate efforts among the many entities that track and report on critical incidents and child fatalities caused by abuse or neglect. In 2008, in an effort to obtain more consistent and accurate information about child fatalities, the Board established the Children’s Special Investigations Unit (CSIU). The CSIU was tasked with conducting independent and impartial investigations to enhance the legal reviews of cases involving child death or serious injury caused by abuse or neglect. By ordinance, the CSIU could be activated only at the request of the Board, an individual member of the Board, or the director of the Department of Children and Family Services. Since 2011, the CSIU has issued 21 reports, the vast majority of which were issued prior to 2015. The CSIU has released only two reports in 2016, both of which were based on incidents that occurred in 2014 or earlier.

In June 2013, the Board established the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection (BRC) to review systemic child protection failures and provide recommendations for needed reforms. To fully implement the recommendations reflected in the BRC’s final report issued in April 2014, the Board established the Office of Child Protection (OCP) to guide the County in appropriate and strategic utilization of

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MOTION

RIDLEY-THOMAS \_\_\_\_\_

KUEHL \_\_\_\_\_

KNABE \_\_\_\_\_

ANTONOVICH \_\_\_\_\_

SOLIS \_\_\_\_\_

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programs and services. On May 10, 2016, the Board authorized the addition of the OCP to the list of those who could access reports issued by the CSIU.

In addition to addressing the recommendations provided in the BRC report and new policy initiatives, the OCP is now in a position to provide recommendations on existing functions and personnel as they relate to child safety and well-being. It is important that, where appropriate, the County consider consolidating resources to effectively address the very important issue of child welfare while avoiding redundancy, enhancing accountability, and allowing County staff to respond quickly to incidents and issues as they arise.

**WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Direct the Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors to transfer the Children's Special Investigations Unit (CSIU) to the Office of Child Protection; and
2. Direct the Office of Child Protection to report back, in writing as part of the FY 2016-17 Recommended Budget in April 2017, to the Board of Supervisors with an assessment of the budgetary and operational impacts and a recommendation on whether these resources could be better used in another capacity, given the establishment of the OCP and the evolution of the functions of the Department of Children and Family Services, Interagency Council on Abuse and Neglect, and County Counsel.

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MRT:ecw

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