

## Testimony of Scott M. Hanson RE Protection and Advocacy funding

I live in Rolla, along with my wife, Elizabeth, and my daughters, Sarah and Hannah. Sarah is 31 years old, has moderate autism and is nonverbal. She goes to dayhab at the Kalix center in Rolla each weekday. On November 27, 2024, Sarah was the victim of abuse perpetrated by two Kalix employees. No other Kalix employees, although mandatory reporters, reported the incident. Sarah's Easter Seals caregiver, who happened to witness the incident, reported it to her Easter Seals supervisor within minutes. Since the incident happened at the end of the day, it was not possible to report it to Protection and Advocacy (P & A) nor Kalix that day. Because it happened the day before Thanksgiving, Kalix and P&A were closed until December 2. My wife reported the incident first thing Monday morning (Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>) to P & A and Kalix. From that point Kalix followed the law to report abuse to P & A within the time limit outlined by law. However, they did little to protect our daughter at her day program by allowing the two abusers to continue working in the same building and the same room with our daughter each day. This caused additional distress to Sarah. It was not until P & A reported their decision on January 14 that one of the abusers was let go and the other reprimanded.

P & A took our report on the 2nd of December, as well as the Kalix internal report later the same day. From there it was referred to our local P & A representative. My wife and I heard nothing from anyone after that. When 3 weeks had passed, my wife was finally able to reach our P & A representative to ask how things were proceeding. Unfortunately, they had not had time, with all the other cases she was handling, to even open our daughter's file. Finally, on January 14, P&A concluded that, based upon the video evidence, the two Kalix employees did commit an act of abuse against Sarah. They also saw that the written testimony provided by the Easter Seals caregiver was spot on. However they NEVER have interviewed the Easter Seals caregiver. That should have been part of any investigation. Kalix did not talk to the Easter Seals caregiver either.

As Sarah's parents and legal guardians, we are horrified that such an event has happened. Moreover, our grief and anger have been multiplied by the fact that Chris Haseleu, the CEO of Kalix, has refused to let us see the video of the incident, saying that it is Kalix policy to not release the video. However, at a recent meeting with Kalix, an employee of Kalix read to us the published Kalix policy that stated that sharing of the video was "at the discretion of the CEO."

As if Haseleu's callous refusal to let us see the video was not painful enough, P&A added to the affront: When referring to Haseleu's refusal to let us see the video, Veronica Zietz, P&A Executive Director, wrote in an email "I'm sure they (Kalix) could be forced to hand over the video, but the issue has been dealt with so I wouldn't really see the point unless there was

an interest in a civil suit by the parent against the provider.” So Zietz cannot even imagine that, if a parent is told that their child has been abused on camera, the parent would want to see the video! Imagine being a parent of a child that has been abused! Also imagine if that child could not verbally express to you the terror she felt (because our daughter cannot speak) and describe to you what happened. Would you not want to see the video of what took place? But Zeitz clearly states, in her own words, that she does not understand why a parent would care to see the video! How unfeeling, cold, unsympathetic does a person have to be to say that??? It is a cruel irony that such an individual is the executive director of an organization dedicated to advocating for disabled persons and their families!!!

For this reason, I recommend that, at the very least, P&A funding be suspended pending an investigation. We should find out whether P&A is really doing what it should. Each family that has asked them for help in the last 5 years should be asked how well P&A has served them. I want to add that my wife and I had a meeting with Kalix on January 27<sup>th</sup> and had invited our P&A representative but the P&A representative said that they don't typically attend such meetings. However, they have done so in the past, because we saw it ourselves in meetings we had with the school when Sarah was in elementary school. So something has gone radically wrong with P&A since then.