

SENATOR MICHELLE BENSON
SENATE DISTRICT 31
Deputy Majority Leader
Chair, Health & Human Services Finance & Policy



Senate

State of Minnesota

August 19, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Commissioner Pam Wheelock
Minnesota Department of Human Services
540 Cedar Street
112 Administration Building
St Paul, MN 55155

Dear Commissioner Wheelock:

As I stated at our joint committee hearing on Tuesday, August 13th, we would be following up with written questions we believe were not sufficiently answered in our hearing. We ask that you please respond to each question, in writing, no later than close of business on Friday, August 23rd.

1. Were there any formal complaints filed about Commissioner Lourey's performance? If so, what is the status of each complaint?
2. Were there any formal complaints filed about Chief-of-Staff Weeks' performance? If so, what is the status of each complaint?
3. Were there any formal complaints filed about Deputy Commissioner Johnson's performance? If so, what is the status of each complaint?
4. Were there any formal complaints filed about Deputy Commissioner Wilson's performance? If so, what is the status of each complaint?
5. What are the processes for employees to report waste, fraud, and abuse?
6. What oversights and internal controls are in place to ensure employees do not suffer retaliation if they do report fraud, waste, or abuse?
7. We have now heard from several sources that there is a persistent culture of ignoring and silencing whistleblowers at the department – even those whose jobs are to oversee compliance and accountability within the department – what concrete steps have you taken to reverse this culture?
8. And what steps are you implementing to ensure department leaders understand the importance of listening to subordinates' concerns?
9. If you learned that a grant recipient was not handling money appropriately what steps would you take to recover funds? And how long would it take to stem the questionable flow of funds?

10. What percent of complaints sent to the OIG are investigated? And what percent resulted in action?
11. Did you speak with Governor Walz or his staff about any specific concerns they have with the direction of the department? What were those concerns?
12. Did you speak with Deputy Commissioner Johnson about his resignation? If so, what do you believe motivated his resignation?
13. Did you ask Deputy Commissioner Johnson to rescind his resignation? If so, what changes did he want made to the agency?
14. Did you speak with Deputy Commissioner Wilson about her resignation? If so, what do you believe motivated her resignation?
15. Did you ask Deputy Commissioner Wilson to rescind her resignation? If so, what changes did she want made to the agency?

If any answer to the previous questions contains information you don't believe you can legally provide to us, we ask that that information be sent to the Office of the Legislative Auditor for review of confidentiality, and that you include a citation of what specific statute or rule you believe prevents you from sharing that information in your response to us.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Benson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Michelle Benson