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Washington State Senate

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October 5, 2026

Secretary Tana Senn
Washington State
Department of Children, Youth, and Families
1500 Jefferson St. SE
Olympia, WA 9850

Dear Secretary Senn:

I write today to express my deep concern regarding the Department of Children, Youth, and Families' decision to continue its practice of redacting the names of family home providers in public award announcements. Your press release identifying recipients of ECEAP funding released on September 21, 2026, shows redactions of the names of three family home providers. These redactions are directly contrary to the state's decision earlier this year not to redact the names of family home providers receiving other early learning grants, and I would ask that DCYF discontinue this practice entirely.

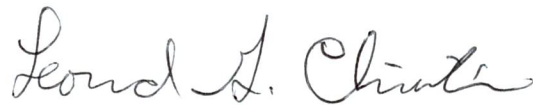
DCYF's press release for ECEAP expansion indicates that the names have been redacted "per WA Initiative 1501" which is now RCW 42.56.640—the Seniors and Vulnerable Individuals Safety and Financial Crimes Prevention Act. That act, derived from an initiative to the people in 2016, is an exception to Washington's Public Records Act. It had the intent of protecting senior citizens and vulnerable people from identity theft and consumer fraud. Clearly its intent was not to shield businesses from disclosure that they are public funds recipients. All exceptions to the Public Records Act are legally required to be interpreted narrowly to provide the greatest transparency possible. Yet DCYF continues to use the initiative as carte blanche to hide the names of businesses receiving government funds.

Concealing business names tied to public funding is troubling, and it represents a departure from the transparent, open, and accountable government that Washingtonians rightly expect. Further, this decision is contrary to news articles which state that the Attorney General's Office provided guidance to the state in May of this year that RCW 42.56.640 does not apply to public announcements of funding recipients.

These providers are not anonymous private individuals. Instead, they are licensed businesses who choose to voluntarily participate in a publicly administered program funded by taxpayer dollars and administered by a state agency. The public has a legitimate interest in understanding what entities are receiving state funds, how those funds are distributed, and whether public investments are being spent wisely.

Identifying and protecting the use of public funds is an essential duty of our state government. Countless state programs routinely disclose business recipients' identities without incident—including grants to small businesses, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and health care providers. It is difficult to discern why licensed childcare family home providers should be treated differently absent a clear statutory mandate.

Transparency is not optional when public funds are involved. The people of Washington deserve assurance that their government conducts its business openly, consistently, and in full accordance with the law. Accordingly, I respectfully request that the Department of Children, Youth, and Families promptly review this policy and revise its disclosure practices to promote greater transparency moving forward. I welcome the opportunity to have a meeting to discuss these important matters.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Leonard G. Christian". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Senator Leonard G Christian
4th District