

The Miami Herald

August 15, 2017

Opinion

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FOSTER CARE FAILURE

It is heartbreaking to learn that yet a third child in our state's foster care system has ended her life by hanging herself within the last year. The tragedies of teens like Giulianna Ramos Bermudez, Lauryn Martin and Naika Venant show us that privatization of the child welfare system has done little to improve the welfare of Florida's children.

Under the current system, the Department of Children & Families assigns care to contractors, who frequently subcontract and employ other third party contractors to administer care, provide residential placements, and address the therapeutic needs of these children.

This system of hiring private contractors to oversee foster care in much of the state has frequently led to insufficient therapeutic placements, physical and emotional abuse, and, sadly, death, for too many children.

How many more children must we lose before the state makes critically needed changes to its failed experiment with privatization and outsourcing of child welfare services?

- Howard M. Talenfeld,
president,
Florida's Children First,
Plantation