

Chinese military has placed hundreds of ballistic missiles on the coast of China aimed at Taiwan. To make matters worse China is building more and more of them. The communist authorities portray the peaceful cause of Taiwan independence as a terrorist movement. Nothing could be further from the truth. Taiwan threatens no one. On the contrary Taiwan has been 100 percent supportive of the war against terrorism and generously gave humanitarian support for the new Afghan Government. China on the other hand helped the Taliban build a 14,000 secure telephone line system.

China has also assisted Iraq in building a fiber optic communications network that is used by the Iraqi military. It is clear who supports terrorism and who does not.

First Lady Chen Wu will be bringing with her a strong message from her husband and the people of Taiwan that Taiwan's cooperation with the United States in the antiterrorism campaign will continue and be strengthened further. This is the sort of mature behavior that the world has come to expect from Taiwan. We hope that Beijing will soon follow in Taiwan's footsteps and become a truly constructive member of the world community. Such a change in behavior will benefit the Chinese and Taiwanese people and the region and the world as a whole. Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to vote for H. Res. 533, and welcome Madame Chen to the United States. I ask that the full text of H. Res. 533 be printed at this point in the RECORD.

#### H. RES. 533

Whereas Taiwan's First Lady Chen Wu Sue-jen, wife and political partner to her husband President Chen Shui-bian, has been unwaveringly and courageously striving for justice, human rights, and democracy in Taiwan and has herself held a seat in the Legislative Yuan;

Whereas Taiwan is now a model vibrant democracy an one of the top ten trading partners of the United States;

Whereas supporting democracy, human rights, and free market economies has been a longstanding policy of the United States;

Whereas the Government and people in Taiwan have consistently provided tremendous support and generous contributions to the United States after the terrorist attacks against the United States that occurred on September 11, 2001;

Whereas First Lady Chen Wu was one of the main forces behind Taiwan's charity and humanitarian assistance for the victims of the terrorist attacks;

Whereas First Lady Chen Wu will visit the United States beginning on September 22, 2002, and will bring with her a strong message from her husband and the people of Taiwan that Taiwan's cooperation with the United States in this joint anti-terrorism campaign will continue and be further strengthened;

Whereas First Lady Chen Wu, on behalf of President Chen Shui-bian, visited France in November 2001 to receive the International Human Rights Award; and

Whereas First Lady Chen Wu, confined to a wheelchair due to a tragic traffic accident during a political campaign, is a strong and effective advocate for Taiwan's physically challenged citizens: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives extends its warmest welcome to Taiwan's First Lady Chen Wu Sue-jen during her visit to Washington, D.C., in September 2002.

#### CONTINUING CRISIS IN FOSTER CARE

#### HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 18, 2002

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, most of us favor federal spending to promote the safety, well-being, and stability of children in the child welfare system. Yet in too many states, federal funds are being used to finance dysfunctional child welfare systems, often operating in violation of federal laws. We cannot continue to perpetuate a system that fails to protect children or their families or provide necessary services and safeguards.

In the following article, The Miami Herald reports that 183 employees of Florida's Department of Children and Families (DCF) had committed felonies, including child molestation, child abuse, sex crimes and drug dealing. In the report, a DCF official acknowledges that "the most vulnerable people in our community are trusted to people in circumstances where there is a potential for these kinds of back-ground."

In Florida and across the nation, state, county and local agencies are facing difficulties in recruiting, retaining, training and supervising child welfare workers. Having poorly trained, overworked, underpaid, caseworkers leads to massive turnovers, which, in turn, exacerbates the challenge of accountability in a system responsible for safety and well being of children.

The child welfare system must be reformed to improve the delivery of mandated services, the efficient operation of accountability systems, and successful permanent placements for children. In addition, there must be immediate and sustained oversight of the child welfare programs by the Department of Health and Human Services, and by state governments.

The article follows:

[From the Miami Herald, Sept. 8, 2002]

STATE CHILD-WELFARE PAYROLL INCLUDES EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE CRIMINAL PASTS  
(By David Kidwell, Jason Grotto and Tere Figueras)

Florida's embattled child-welfare agency—the Department of Children & Families—employs at least 183 people who have been arrested and punished for an array of felonies including child molestation, child abuse, sex crimes, drug dealing, even welfare fraud against the agency itself, a Herald investigation has found.

For instance, the head of the agency's data-security team in Tallahassee is listed on the state's list of sexual predators for molesting a 5-year-old boy.

In other cases, the crimes committed by DCF employees are directly relevant to the positions of trust they now hold.

In Miami, the director of rehabilitative services for a mental hospital has twice been arrested for cocaine buys.

In Chattahoochee, a man who supervises mental patients was charged with attempted first-degree murder in 1986 for firing a shot at his wife and racking a shotgun at her as she cowered with their son in a closet. He pleaded no contest to lesser charges.

In Kissimmee, the DCF hired a child-abuse investigator who two years earlier was convicted of violating a restraining order issued after she threw a brick through her ex-boy-

friend's living room window and smashed his car windshield with a tire iron.

In Gainesville, a night Supervisor at a home for the developmentally disabled was convicted in 1994 in a string of six burglaries at an apartment complex where her job as a maid gave her access to a pass key.

In Tampa, a family services counselor was allowed to keep her job despite charges that she beat up her 68-year-old mother in the front yard during an argument.

Administrators of the DCF—already beleaguered by criticism over the agency's handling of cases involving missing children that led to the resignation of department Secretary Kathleen Kearney—say they have worked hard to screen employees.

In most cases, they say, the agency was aware of the charges and thoroughly reviewed the backgrounds of the employees to make sure their lives were back on track and that DCF clients would not be imperiled. "In a perfect world, none of our employees would have any kind of criminal past," said Tim Botcher, a DCF spokesman in Tallahassee. "But we just know that is unrealistic. In reality, we are no different than any other large organization." He said the 183 employees found by The Herald should be considered in the context of an enormous agency with 24,000 employees statewide. "When it comes to our attitude on employees who have broken the law, we have considered the offenses and acted accordingly."

The DCF, however, had not complied with Herald requests to provide personnel files to verify many of the agency's actions in these cases. DCF administrators acknowledged that in some cases the agency did not know about the criminal pasts of its employees.

This week, three submitted their resignations after Herald inquiries. They include the Miami rehabilitative services director, a human-services worker at Florida State Hospital in Chattahoochee who pleaded no contest to selling cocaine in 1994, and a human-services analyst in Miami caught in an insurance-fraud scheme in 1997.

#### DIDN'T DISCLOSE

DCF administrators said each of them failed to disclose their arrests to the DCF as required by the agency.

Among the 183 employees charged were three who have been punished for child abuse, 22 for grand theft, seven for aggravated battery, two for DUI manslaughter, three for dealing drugs, 10 for aggravated assault with a weapon and nine for welfare fraud.

The Herald also found one man, a \$61,446-per-year supervisor in the DCF's data-processing center in Tallahassee, on Florida's registry of sexual predators.

Carl Avery Anderson, 43, was hired in 1988 while he was still on house arrest for molesting a 5-year old boy in his care. According to police records, he admitted to the charges and pleaded no contest to lewd and lascivious assault on a child in 1987. The charges cost Anderson his data job at the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Anderson now insists he is innocent and that police tricked him into a confession. "I have never been in trouble in my life," he told The Herald. "If I had tried to fight that . . . maybe I could have gotten off. I pleaded because I was ignorant. People who know me know I didn't do this."

#### DATA SECURITY

He is now head of the DCF's data-security team, where he supervises three others and is responsible for making sure the agency's enormous stockpile of sensitive and private information remains that way.

"He has been an excellent employee who has been promoted during his career here," Botcher said. "It would be a concern of ours

if he had direct contact with clients, but we don't feel his job is relevant to the crimes.

"He does have security clearance that would allow him to access client information," Bottcher said. "We did not consider him to be a risk."

Some of the names on The Herald's list entered pretrial diversion programs in which prosecutors agreed to drop the cases after the charges were filed and the people completed a program of probation, counseling or specialized classes.

Among them: Bart Harrell, 40, who was hired as a patient-activities coordinator at the Chattahoochee mental hospital less than seven months after he was charged in 1989 with sexual battery on a person younger than 18 in Alabama, according to records and interviews.

#### NOT REQUIRED

Employees were not required to disclose arrests to the DCF before a policy change in 1994, said Walt Cook, the DCF's assistant director of human resources.

Harrell declined to speak about the case but said: "Those records are supposed to be sealed and expunged. You are about to ruin my life again over something that didn't happen 13 years ago."

Among others who were hired or kept their jobs after agreeing to pretrial intervention: Sabrina Barnes, 32, a child-protective investigator in Kissimmee. In 1996, police reports say, she smashed an ex-boyfriend's windshield and threw a brick through his window. Barnes was later convicted of violating a domestic violence injunction after another confrontation with the same man.

Susan Arnick Alston, 55, a family services counselor in Tampa. According to police, she beat up her 68-year-old mother in the front yard in 1993.

In both cases, DCF administrators say they were aware of the charges. "People make mistakes in their lives, and there's such a thing as rehabilitation," said Yvonne Vassel, a DCF spokeswoman in Barnes' district. "The process was followed, and she was truthful with her disclosures to the state." Alston, who licenses foster homes, was put on administrative duties until the completion of her court case. "Had she pleaded guilty or no contest, she would have been disqualified from her employment," said Shauna Donovan, spokeswoman for the agency's Tampa district. "But since the charges were dismissed, she was allowed to return to her normal duties."

In Miami, two employees resigned Friday amid The Herald investigation.

Calvin Eugene Dandy, 54, the \$45,000-per-year Miami director of rehabilitative services at the South Florida Evaluation and Treatment Center. He resigned after being confronted by district administrators about a 1999 arrest for buying cocaine that he failed to disclose.

All employees are required to disclose any arrests immediately, and employees in sensitive "caretaker" positions—those who spend more than 15 hours a week in direct contact with DCF clients—are reassigned until the criminal case is closed.

If employees in caretaker positions are convicted or plead no contest to most felonies and first-degree misdemeanors, they will be fired unless they apply for and are granted an exemption.

Lucian Bledsoe, the agency's human resources director in Miami, said Dandy failed to disclose his 1999 arrest, which came 14 months after the agency granted him an exemption for a similar charge from 1993. He was sentenced to probation in 1993. In 1999, the charges were dropped because lab reports on the drugs did not come back in time for a crucial court date, according to Miami-Dade state attorney's office records.

Dandy did not return repeated messages left at his home and office.

"The bottom line is he knew his responsibility to disclose that arrest, and he didn't do it," Bledsoe said.

Also resigning Friday: Mercedes Medina, 52, a \$28,000-a-year human-services analyst in Miami, failed to disclose a 1998 arrest for insurance fraud. She pleaded no contest to a string of staged auto accidents, court records show. "I was trying to help some people out," Medina told The Herald. "But it was so stupid. The stupidest thing I have ever done in my whole life." Medina acknowledged she never told the DCF about the insurance-fraud allegations or 1997 arrests for drunken driving. She said she didn't think it was required.

The Herald found two DCF employees in caretaker positions who have been charged and punished for child abuse, including Jennie Arnett Barkley, now 54, another supervisor who oversees mental patients at Chattahoochee. She pleaded no contest and served two years' probation on 1986 charges of grand theft and child abuse after she took her 15-year-old daughter on a shoplifting spree at Gayfer's, court records show. Barkley declined to be interviewed.

The Herald also found nine current employees who were charged and punished for defrauding the agency itself out of welfare money, including one woman who was hired in June while still on probation for the charge.

#### RECENT HIRE

Another recent DCF hire was 27-year-old Amy Curtis, who in May became a night supervisor at Tocachale in Gainesville, an institution of group homes for the developmentally disabled. Curtis was convicted in 1994 in a series of six burglaries at an apartment complex where her job as a maid gave her a pass key, court records show. She had twice been denied the job because of her past, but in May the agency relented, Tom Barnes, the DCF's district spokesman, said "there was a feeling she had moved from blaming her crimes on her circumstances. She was now taking responsibility." Barnes said such demanding jobs that pay so little sometimes force the agency to "strike a balance."

"We are very aware that the most vulnerable people in our community are trusted to people in circumstances where there is a potential for these kinds of backgrounds," he said. It's a constant battle to keep these positions filled."

Another institution with a concentration of employees with past criminal charges is the mental hospital at Chattahoochee.

The Herald found 46 hospital employees with felony charges in their backgrounds including aggravated battery, robbery, fraud, burglary, arson and trafficking in stolen property.

#### LONGTIME WORKER

Among them is Frank Dickens, 55, who for 36 years has supervised mental patients at the facility. In 1986, Dickens was charged with attempted first-degree murder and battery after his wife called police and told them he fired a shot at her head in a drunken rage. According to police reports, he shot at her with a pistol in the kitchen after she tried to stop him from whipping their son with a belt. Dickens pleaded no contest to shooting within a building and aggravated assault. He served 90 days in Gadsden County Jail and was placed on probation for five years. But he was not convicted because a judge agreed to withhold an adjudication of guilt. Dickens told The Herald the gun went off accidentally and that his wife fabricated most of her allegations. "Your wife can tell on you tomorrow, and the police could pick you up for it," he said.

Dickens was granted an exemption as a caretaker employee in 1997, spokesman Bottcher said, in large part because of his long career of service at Chattahoochee.

Dickens said his crimes are minor compared with what he has seen inside the walls of the mental hospital in his 36 years as an employee there.

"We've had women killed in that place, strangled. We've had people shot," Dickens said. "I've been beat up, threatened at knife point. It's a disaster up there, and You're asking me whether I should be working there?"

"Some of these people have committed the worst crimes you can imagine," Dickens said. "And they're worse than I am, because they've been convicted."

#### HONORING THE PERMIAN BASIN GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL

##### HON. LARRY COMBEST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 18, 2002

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the girls and leaders of the Permian Basin Girl Scout Council in Texas for exemplary service in their communities. Working through the "90 Days of Service" project, these Girl Scouts joined with their Texan sisters to provide 356,737 hours of service throughout the state.

Juliet Low founded Girls Scouts of the USA in Savannah, Georgia in 1912. In honor of the 90th anniversary of the organization, many Girl Scout Councils participated in a 90 day long service project. The girls and leaders of the Permian Basin Girl Scout Council worked to improve the environment through adopting highways, cleaning up parks, desert lands and beaches, recycling, and working in a graffiti abatement program. They sought to aid the less fortunate through collections for Lions Clubs, food banks, humane societies, homeless programs, and children and baby organizations. These dedicated young women contributed to society by planting flowers, working with Habitat for Humanity, tutoring senior citizens in computer skills, making quilts for the needy, painting murals, rewiring lamps and providing flag ceremonies. Through hours of hard work, these girls celebrated their own special anniversary by giving others reasons to celebrate.

It is with great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, that I honor these dedicated young women for their selfless service to their communities. The Girl Scouts of the Permian Basin Girl Scout Council demonstrate the promise of America's youth. I wish to congratulate these girls for their hard work and dedication in serving fellow Americans.

#### ON INTRODUCING THE "REDUCING EDUCATION LOAN REPAYMENT ACT"

##### HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 18, 2002

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, millions of American parents sent their children off to college. For many of them, however, the worry about how to pay for college