



# New Hampshire

## House of Representatives

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### Speaker Sherman A. Packard

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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#### **NH House Leaders Express Concern, Urgency Related to SYSC Matter**

**CONCORD** - On Friday, March 20, in a meeting of the Oversight Commission on Children's Services (OCCS), Child Advocate Cassandra Sanchez presented her concerns regarding recent alleged incidents at the SYSC. As soon as House leadership became aware of those concerns, Speaker Packard and his team began engaging with Senate leadership and state agencies to gather further information.

On Monday, March 23, the Speaker, Speaker Pro Tempore, and leaders of the House Children & Family Law Committee met with top executives from the Department of Youth, Children, and Families (DCYF), including Director Marie Noonan. After hearing DCYF's response to the Office of the Child Advocate's (OCA) report, we determined that further investigation of the facts was warranted.

On Tuesday, March 24, several members of House leadership met with Senate President Sharon Carson and representatives from the Governor's office to discuss the allegations. President Carson, in her capacity as Chair of OCCS, promptly appointed three members of the Commission, two Representatives and one Senator, to further investigate the OCA's concerns and report their findings back to the OCCS.

On Friday, March 27, the three investigative designees joined the Speaker, Speaker Pro Tempore, and several other legislators on a site visit to the SYSC. This was one step in a broader investigation, which has included meetings with the OCA and the NH Disability Rights Center. This investigation is ongoing.

House Speaker Sherman Packard offered, *“House leadership is gravely concerned about the allegations expressed by the Office of the Child Advocate, and we have been treating this matter with the utmost urgency.”*

Speaker Pro Tempore Jim Kofalt stated, *“House leadership, including leaders from the Children & Family Law Committee, will remain in close communication with the OCA and other state agencies as the fact-finding process continues.”*

House leadership will take whatever action the facts warrant and remains committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all young people in state care.

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