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February 24, 2022

The Honorable Glenn Youngkin  
Governor of Virginia  
Patrick Henry Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
1111 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia, 23219

Dear Governor Youngkin:

One of the key duties of the Board of Trustees for the Family and Children's Trust is to advise you and the Department of Social Services on matters related to child abuse and neglect and family violence.

With this charge in mind, I am writing regarding *Senate Bill 348*, which amends Virginia's child support guidelines related to the treatment of incarceration as 'voluntary unemployment' when determining ability to pay in the process of establishing or reviewing a child support order.

We recognize that there are various subjective perspectives on this issue. But objectively, we know that this change is required by federal regulation and projected to impact only one percent of cases enrolled in the program. Without its full passage, amended for federally compliant language, Virginia stands to lose over 80 million dollars in federal support. In addition to over \$3 million dollars in loss of TANF dollars, Virginia's Child Support Enforcement Program budget will be reduced by 66% and will lose access to critical tools, provided only through the federal government, that are essential to its work. In essence, the program will be gutted without this regulation change.

In addition to being an essential service for nearly 300,000 families, Virginia's Child Support Enforcement Program is a cost saving system for the Commonwealth that collects over \$650 million annually for the support of children. We know that the stresses of poverty and economic uncertainty are significant contributors to child maltreatment and family instability. We also know that economic challenges are often the primary driving force in cases of child neglect. For many parents raising children, particularly those doing so alone, child support is vital to their household budgets.

Virginia is one of the only states that remains out of compliance with this requirement. Your administration has made a clear and on-going commitment to supporting parents and families. We hope that you will continue to demonstrate that priority by supporting amendments to *Senate Bill 348* and thereby assuring the on-going existence of the Commonwealth's Child Support and Enforcement Program.

Many thanks for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia Powell".

Virginia Powell, PhD  
Board of Trustees Member, Family and Children's Trust  
Child Abuse and Neglect Advisory Committee Co-Chair

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