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RUBEN CORTEZ, JR.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 2

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February 14, 2022

Commissioner Mike Morath
Texas Education Agency
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Commissioner Morath:

During the last SBOE meeting on January 28, 2022, my colleagues raised concerns about a charter school application submitted by Sunny Glen Children's Home in San Benito, Texas. I am highly disturbed by some of the publicly available information concerning this applicant.

Sunny Glen operates group foster homes in my district. A review of Texas Department of Family and Protective Services records by Type Investigations¹ in 2020 documented 140 deficiencies attributed to Sunny Glen since 2016. Some of those deficiencies involved corporal punishment, and in one case, violating a state standard against "restraints that obstruct a child's airway."

Sunny Glen contracted with the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement and SOG International in 2019 to house unaccompanied migrant children inside a former Wal-Mart in Raymondville under the name "New Day Resiliency Center." A report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services obtained by Judicial Watch² documented five cases of sexual abuse at Sunny Glen New Day Resiliency Center over the course of a one-month period in 2021.

The troubled history of Sunny Glen's foster homes is disturbing enough. But it is beyond outrageous that anyone involved with running a child prison camp would think they are qualified to run a school.

Our precious children deserve better. I urge your office to thoroughly investigate this applicant and ensure they do not receive one more dime of our taxpayer dollars.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruben Cortez, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ruben Cortez, Jr.
State Board of Education, District 2

1. <https://www.typeinvestigations.org/investigation/2020/11/02/a-christian-foster-home-had-a-troubling-past-trump-gave-it-millions-to-house-immigrant-kids-anyway/>

2. <https://texasborderbusiness.com/judicial-watch-new-hhs-documents-reveal-sexual-and-physical-abuse-of-unaccompanied-minors/>