



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU
Governor

January 18, 2022

Chief Justice Kimberly S. Budd
Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court
1 Pemberton Square
Boston, MA 02108

Chief Justice Budd,

I write to you today with grave concerns surrounding the ongoing investigation into the disappearance of Harmony Montgomery. It is everyone's first priority to bring her home safe. And in the furtherance of that mission, I have made a commitment to leave no stone unturned so that we may learn as much as we can about her previous situation and possible whereabouts.

New Hampshire undertakes a critical incident review of all extreme cases involving a child. Harmony Montgomery's case rises to such a level and at my direction, I have ordered the Division of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) to accelerate the process and begin the review of Harmony's case while it is ongoing. We are doing this in the hopes we might discover important information on Harmony's case. As that review proceeds new questions are emerging regarding decisions within your court system that have had a profoundly negative impact on Harmony's well-being.

Harmony's father Adam Montgomery is a monstrous drug dealer with previous convictions including shooting someone in the head and a separate armed attack on two women in Massachusetts.

This family was troubled, transient and originally engaged with the Massachusetts child protection system. Only as an unfortunate result of Harmony's disappearance has New Hampshire come to learn the full extent of the family's background and the type of upbringing Harmony faced prior to arriving in New Hampshire.

In fact, in December 2018, the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (MA DCF) requested that New Hampshire DCYF conduct a home study of Adam Montgomery and his then wife Kayla Montgomery. NH's DCYF Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children unit responded to MA DCF stating that in order to conduct the home study, additional information was needed regarding Adam Montgomery and his wife's progress and their engagement of services with MA DCF. This is a standard request in such cross-border cases, but while NH DCYF was waiting for the necessary information, a court in Lawrence, Massachusetts abruptly gave sole custody of Harmony to her father in February of 2019.

It is unclear why the Massachusetts courts moved so quickly with this permanent placement prior to the completion of the home study. Why would the Massachusetts court choose to place custody of Harmony with this horrible individual? What caused such a fateful decision?

What makes this case exceptionally unusual is that not only did a Massachusetts judge move to place this child with such a monster as Adam Montgomery, but it did so WITHOUT an Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) home study to be completed. This home study likely would have proven that Adam Montgomery was unfit.

As a result of your judge's decision, New Hampshire officials were not afforded the ability to monitor Harmony's safety. Had the court required that an Interstate Compact home study be completed, there would have been more checks in the system to help ensure Harmony's safety when she was moved to New Hampshire such as continued oversight on the family. More critically, had New Hampshire had this in place when responding and investigating the alleged incident of abuse in December of 2019, the result would likely have been very different for Harmony.

Why did your court not ensure an ICPC home study was completed prior to the custody transfer?

It would be extremely useful to be able to review the judge's determination and all events leading up to that decision, and as such, I am formally requesting your cooperation in reviewing the determination of your judge and all events and evidence leading up to his decision and making that review public to assist in bringing Harmony Montgomery home safely.

No child should ever leave Massachusetts in the custody of a dangerous criminal like Adam Montgomery. As neighboring states, we owe it to our residents, especially our vulnerable children, that we are working together to protect the best interests of our most vulnerable citizens. We must ensure that moving forward at-risk children of our states are protected and adequately monitored.

Locating Harmony remains our top priority. NH is undergoing an aggressive review of our system, but it is imperative to have all of the information on this case to determine where the system failed and help ensure we take quick action in the hopes that it never happens again.

You owe it to Harmony Montgomery, her loved ones, and the public to fully cooperate in handing over the imperative information on this case that could help provide answers and assist with our search. We hope you can agree time is of the essence and give this matter the urgency that is required.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Sununu
Governor