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February 27, 2019

Senator Patrick Browne
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Box 203016
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3016

Senator Vincent Hughes
Minority Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Box 203007
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3007

Representative Stan Saylor
245 Main Capitol Building
PO Box 202094
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2094

Representative Matthew D. Bradford
512E Main Capitol Building
PO Box 202070
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2070

Representative Karen Boback
Chair, House Children & Youth Committee
PO Box 202117
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2117

Representative Joseph Petrarca
Democratic Chair, House Children & Youth Committee
PO Box 202055
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2055

Re: Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' Oversight and Defunding Glen Mills

Dear Senators Browne and Hughes and Representatives Saylor, Bradford, Boback and Petrarca:

On behalf of the parents, students, and community members with whom we work, we write to express concern about the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' (PA-DHS) oversight of Glen Mills Schools, a residential facility for youth in the delinquency system.

As you begin the budget process for FY19-20, we urgently request that the Appropriations Committee consider eliminating funding for Glen Mills and that the Children and Youth Committee call upon PA-DHS to revoke the facility's state license in light of the dangerous maltreatment of children at this residential placement and lack of quality educational opportunities associated with its on-grounds school.

Our perspective on the urgent need for Senate action is informed by our extensive work with the children and youth that Glen Mills purports to serve.

The Education Law Center is a statewide, non-profit legal advocacy organization that advances the rights of Pennsylvania's most educationally underserved students, including children who are immigrants, children experiencing homelessness, children living in poverty, children of color, children in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, children with disabilities, English learners, and LGBTQ students. For more than 40 years, through legal representation, impact litigation and policy advocacy, ELC has helped countless system-involved youth to obtain the educational services they desperately need to achieve life-long stability.

Our advocacy has exposed widespread issues at a number of residential placements under PA-DHS. However, the conditions at Glen Mills are so particularly egregious that the facility's license must be immediately revoked. As discussed more fully in the attached report, [*Unsafe and Uneducated*](#) and as chronicled in a recent investigative article in the [*Philadelphia Inquirer*](#), Glen Mills' staff have engaged in such frequent and repeated violence and abuse that it is estimated that an incident of child maltreatment by staff occurred roughly every other month from December 2013 to January 2017 alone. Notably, Glen Mills staff have also refused to allow PA-DHS staff and state police access to their facility and children residing there. Documented incidents of child maltreatment include:

- A staff member used his elbow to strike a child in the face during a restraint.
- One staff member slapped a child in the face when he/she felt the child was disrespectful, and a second staff member grabbed the child, pushing the child onto the counter-top, and slammed the child's head against the counter two times.
- A staff member punched the child in the ribs during a restraint.

Despite such egregious violations and numerous others, PA-DHS has not revoked a single certificate of compliance for a Glen Mills School facility or replaced any facility's certificate of compliance with a provisional certificate. In addition, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has ignored the deficiencies of its on-grounds school which provides a one-size-fits-all cyber program that fails to meet the educational needs of its at-risk students, including students with disabilities.

In light of PA-DHS' inaction in response to these developments, we urge the Appropriations Committee and the Children and Youth Committee to use their power to hold hearings, divest the facility of state funding, and direct PA-DHS to revoke its license in order to ensure that Glen Mills will not continue to subject children to harmful and dangerous conditions. It is time to end the abuse and trauma of our youth by moving to close this facility.

Respectfully submitted,

Reynelle Brown Staley, Esq.
Policy Director
Education Law Center