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## CYFD Secretary makes exit amidst brewing controversies

Santa Fe, NM – Today the Children Youth and Families Department Cabinet Secretary, Brian Blalock resigned. House Republican lawmakers today issued the following statements concerning Blalock’s exit and serious concerns over the department’s performance.

*“I am not surprised that Secretary Blalock would resign- during the past two interim hearings bipartisan lawmakers asked tough questions about how CYFD is protecting our most precious asset- our children,” said House Republican Caucus Chair Rebecca Dow (Truth or Consequences). “Blalock and his staff evaded every question with excuses and stall tactics, which is representative of what most families involved with CYFD face every day. We have had ample opportunity to reform CYFD, and create a system with accountability and transparency that puts the children first instead of endless excuses.”*

Blalock’s department has faced increasing scrutiny over the past year. Recently it was revealed in [Searchlight NM](#) that “at least a half a dozen high-level” staff were reprimanded, fired, or resigned for questioning a major software contract. The department’s usage of the Signal app also brought the Lujan Grisham administration under [investigation](#) for blatantly disregarding public transparency laws in what the administration calls “transitory” messages. Transparency and staff controversies aside, CYFD has also faced media scrutiny over several scandals involving abuse of children within their system.

*“I have heard from many New Mexicans that independent oversight and accountability are needed from the top down within CYFD- this is not a new issue and it is troubling that three years into Lujan Grisham’s term we are still having the same conversations,” said Representative Kelly Fajardo (R-Los Lunas). “Community activists have asked Santa Fe for an independent ombudsman to provide everyone within CYFD fairness and honesty and unfortunately those efforts have stalled. I look forward to working with the new secretary, however until the culture in the department changes I worry that the same headlines will continue to repeat themselves and CYFD will continue to fail to protect New Mexico’s children.”*

Blalock did not attend Lujan Grisham’s press conference announcing her new CYFD secretary.

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