6:19-cv-01567-JD Date Filed 11/17/22 Entry Number 243-33 Page 1 of 6

EXHIBIT 32

From: ccook@lambdalegal.org <ccook@lambdalegal.org>

Sent: Friday, January 22, 2021 11:39 AM

To: Katherine Janson < <u>kjanson@cravath.com</u>>

Cc: Serena Candelaria <scandelaria@cravath.com>; Peter Barbur < PBarbur@cravath.com>;

kloewy@lambdalegal.org

Subject: FW: Foster Parent Inquiry

External (ccook@lambdalegal.org)

Report This Email FAQ

From: Brandy Welch <

Sent: Friday, January 22, 2021 11:31 AM **To:** Currey Cook < CCook@lambdalegal.org>

Subject: Fwd: Foster Parent Inquiry

Begin forwarded message:

From: Currey Cook < CCook@lambdalegal.org>

Date: May 6, 2019 at 3:29:47 PM EDT

To: Brandy Welch

<sdunn@aclusc.org>

Subject: RE: Foster Parent Inquiry



From: Brandy Welch ·

Sent: Monday, May 6, 2019 8:05 AM

To: Currey Cook <ccook@lambdalegal.org>

Subject: Re: Foster Parent Inquiry

Get Outlook for Android

From: Brandy Welch

Sent: Wednesday, May 1, 2019 4:10:55 PM

To: Currey Cook

Cc: Eden ♥; lcooper@aclu.org; Susan Dunn

Subject: Re: Foster Parent Inquiry

On Wed, May 1, 2019 at 4:05 PM Currey Cook < ccook@lambdalegal.org > wrote:

From: Brandy Welch

Sent: Wednesday, May 1, 2019 3:58 PM

To: Currey Cook <ccook@lambdalegal.org>; Eden **♥**

Icooper@aclu.org; Susan Dunn <sdunn@aclusc.org>

Subject: Fwd: Foster Parent Inquiry



----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sharon Betts < sbetts@miraclehill.org >

<u>Date: Wed, May 1, 2019 at 2:22 PM</u> <u>Subject: Foster Parent Inquiry</u>

To:

Dear Ms. Welch and Ms. Rogers,

_

We appreciate your interest in foster care, and we hope we can help you find a way to serve foster children in South Carolina. As you may recall from our telephone conversation on April 11, and as stated on our website, Miracle Hill Ministries is a Christian ministry, and we view our care for needy adults and children as not only compelled by our faith, but as a part of our religious exercise. Accordingly, while we will gladly find a place for anyone to volunteer within our ministry community, we require those who hold positions of spiritual responsibility or influence—including foster parents—to share our Christian mission, motivation, and beliefs.

-

You stated in your inquiry that you attend the Unitarian Universalist Church and that you are in agreement with our doctrinal statement. The Unitarian Universalist Church, however, does not align with traditional Christian doctrine and thereby would not be considered a Christian church. Because we feel a religious obligation to partner with foster parents who share our beliefs and who are active in a Christian church, Miracle Hill will not be a good fit to assist you in your quest to secure state licensure to become foster parents. We can gladly refer you to the following agencies which may be able to assist you in your pursuit of a foster care license.

_

- Heart Felt Calling/DSS (888.828.3555)
- Thornwell Children's Home (864.938.2792)
- Bair Foundation (864.281.0058)
- SAFY (864.250.1601)
- Connie Maxwell Home for Children (864.942.1400)
- Mentor (864.233.9727)
- SC Youth Advocate Program (864.676.0210)
- Growing Homes of Southeast (800.344.5498)
- Lutheran Family Services (843.694.5359)

_

Finally, as noted above, there are many volunteer opportunities at Miracle Hill for which we gladly welcome any volunteers who wish to assist us in providing tangible service to the needy in our community. Should you be interested in learning more, you may look at the volunteer opportunities on our website (www.miraclehill.org).

-

Sharon M. Betts

Foster Care Licensing Supervisor | Foster Care

490 S. Pleasantburg Drive | Greenville, SC 29607

Office: 864.268.4357 | Direct: 864.605.6093

~

Shelter, food and miracles. Every day.

-

~









Miracle Hill exists that homeless children and adults receive food and shelter with compassion, hear the Good News of Jesus Christ and move toward healthy relationships and stability.

This electronic communication (lix losing attachments) may contain confidential information intended only for the use of the named recipient. If you are not the intended recipient, you are not authorized to intercept, read, print, retain, copy, forward, or disseminate this communication. If you have received this communication in error, please immediately notify us by return message or by telephone and delete this communication from your system. Thank you,

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EXHIBIT 33

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Page 1
               UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
 1
                DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
 2
                    GREENVILLE DIVISION
 3
     EDEN ROGERS and
 4
     BRANDY WELCH,
 5
                  Plaintiffs,
 6
                            CASE NO. 6:19-cv-01567-TMC
            vs.
 7
     UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
 8
     AND HUMAN SERVICES;
     ALEX AZAR, in his official capacity as
     Secretary of the UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
     HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES;
10
11
     ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES;
12
     LYNN JOHNSON, in her official capacity as Assistant
     Secretary of the ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND
13
     FAMILIES;
14
     SCOTT LEKAN, in his official capacity as Principal
     Deputy Assistant Secretary of the ADMINISTRATION
15
     FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES;
     HENRY MCMASTER, in his official capacity as
16
     Governor of the STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA;
17
     MICHAEL LEACH, in his official capacity as State
     Director of the SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
18
     SERVICES,
19
                 Defendants.
20
     VIDEOTAPED
21
     DEPOSITION OF:
                      FREDDIE KAREN BUSHA
                       (APPEARING VIA VIRTUAL ZOOM)
22
     DATE:
                       June 21, 2021
23
     TIME:
                       9:02 AM
24
     REPORTED BY:
                       TERRI L. BRUSSEAU
25
                       (APPEARING VIA VIRTUAL ZOOM)
```

1		
		Page 2
1	LOCATION OF	Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, PA
	THE DEPONENT:	- ·
2		Greenville, SC 29601
3	TAKEN BY:	Counsel for the Plaintiffs
		(Katherine Janson)
4		
	APPEARANCES OF C	OUNSEL:
5		
_		FOR THE PLAINTIFFS
6		ROGERS and BRANDY WELCH:
7		ATH SWAINES & MOORE, LLP
8	BY:	KATHERINE D. JANSON
0		(APPEARING VIA VIRTUAL ZOOM) SERENA CANDELARIA
9		(APPEARING VIA VIRTUAL ZOOM)
9	Worl	dwide Plaza
10		Eighth Avenue
- •		York, NY 10019
11) 474-1989
	•	son@cravath.com
12	scan	delaria@cravath.com
13	LAMB	DA LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION
	FUND	, INC.
14	BY:	M. CURREY COOK
		(APPEARING VIA VIRTUAL ZOOM)
15		MAIA ZELKIND
		(APPEARING VIA VIRTUAL ZOOM)
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4 -		York, NY 10005
17	•) 809-8585
18		k@lambdalegal.org kind@lambdalegal.org
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20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		
	1	

	Page 3
1	ATTORNEYS FOR THE DEFENDANTS
	HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
2	ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND
	FAMILIES, THE SECRETARY OF HHS, LYNN
3	JOHNSON, THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
	ADMINISTRATION OF CHILDREN AND
4	FAMILIES, AND STEVEN WAGNER, ASSISTANT
	SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION CHILDREN
5	AND FAMILIES:
6	UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
	DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
7	BY: CHRISTIE V. NEWMAN,
	ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
8	(APPEARING VIA VIRTUAL ZOOM)
	55 Beattie Place, Suite 700
9	Greenville, SC 29601
	(864) 282-2100
10	christie.newman@usdoj.gov
11	ATTORNEYS FOR THE DEFENDANTS
	HENRY MCMASTER, IN HIS OFFICIAL
12	CAPACITY AS GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF
	SOUTH CAROLINA AND MICHAEL LEACH, IN
13	HIS OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS STATE DIRECTOR
	OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
14	SOCIAL SERVICES:
15	NELSON MULLINS RILEY & SCARBOROUGH, LLP
	BY: MILES E. COLEMAN
16	(APPEARING VIA VIRTUAL ZOOM)
4 -	1320 Main Street, 17th Floor
17	Greenville, SC 29201
10	(803) 799-2000
18	miles.coleman@nelsonmullins.com
19	ATTORNEYS FOR MIRACLE HILL MINISTRIES, INC.
00	AND DEPONENT FREDDIE KAREN BUSHA:
20	HAVNCHODEH CINVIED DOVD DA
21	HAYNSWORTH SINKLER BOYD, PA BY: STEVE A. MATTHEWS
21	1201 Main Street, 22nd Floor
22	Columbia, SC 29201-3232
22	(803) 779-3080
23	smatthews@hsblawfirm.com
24	Sma Cone w S chied Law Lilling Com
25	
23	

		Page 4
1	ALSO	PRESENT:
2		Andy Bos, Concierge Technician
		(Appearing Via Virtual Zoom)
3		
		Darren Carreras, Video Technician
4		(Appearing Via Virtual Zoom)
5		(INDEX AT REAR OF TRANSCRIPT)
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	t contract the contract to the	

Page 5 1 VIDEO TECHNICIAN: Good morning, 2 Counselors. My name is Darren Carreras. 3 certified legal videographer in association with Veritext. 4 5 Due to the severity of COVID-19, 6 following the practice of social distancing, I will 7 not be in the same room with the witness. 8 I will record this videotaped deposition remotely. 9 The reporter, Terri L. Brusseau, also will not be 10 in the same room and will swear the witness 11 remotely. 12 Do all parties stipulate to the 13 validity of this video recording, remote swearing, 14 and that it will be admissible in the courtroom as it had been -- as if it had been taken following 15 16 Rule 30 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedures 17 and State's rules where this case is pending? 18 MR. COLEMAN: Yes. 19 Plaintiffs, yes. MS. JANSON: Yes. 20 MS. NEWMAN: Yes, federal defendants 21 do. 22 VIDEO TECHNICIAN: Okay. We're going 23 on the record at 9:02 AM on June 21st, 2021. 24 is Media Unit 1, video recorded deposition of 25 Freddie Karen Busha, taken by counsel for Plaintiff

Page 6 1 in the matter of Rogers verse U.S. Department of Health and Human Services filed in United States 2 3 District Court for the District of South Carolina, Greenville, Case Number 6:19-cv-01567-JD. 4 5 This deposition is being held remotely via Zoom. 6 My name is Darren Carreras with the firm 7 I'm the videographer. Veritext. The court 8 reporter is Terri Brusseau for the firm Veritext. 9 I'm not authorized to administer an oath. I'm not 10 related to any party in this action, nor am I 11 financially interested in the outcome. 12 Counsel and all present in the room, 13 everyone attending remotely, will now state their 14 appearances and affiliations for the record. 15 there are any objections to proceeding, please 16 state them at the time of your appearance beginning 17 with the noticing attorney. 18 MS. JANSON: Kate Janson from Cravath 19 Swaine & Moore for the Plaintiffs. 20 MR. COOK: Currey Cook from Lambda 21 Legal for the Plaintiffs. 22 MS. CANDELARIA: Serena Candelaria from 23 Cravath Swaine & Moore for the Plaintiffs. 24 MS. ZELKIND: Maia Zelkind from Lambda 25 Legal for Plaintiffs.

Page 7 1 MS. NEWMAN: Christie Newman for the 2 federal defendants. 3 MR. COLEMAN: Miles Coleman for Henry McMaster in his official capacity as Governor of 4 5 the State of South Carolina and Michael Leach in 6 his official capacity as director of the South 7 Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. 8 MR. MATTHEWS: Steve Matthews with 9 Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, lawyer for Miracle Hill 10 Ministries, Inc., here representing the witness, 11 Karen Busha. 12 VIDEO TECHNICIAN: Will the court 13 reporter please swear in the witness. 14 FREDDIE KAREN BUSHA 15 being first remotely sworn, testified as follows: 16 **EXAMINATION** 17 BY MS. JANSON: Good morning, Miss Busha. My name is 18 0. 19 Kate Janson. I'm with the firm of Cravath Swaine & 20 Moore and we represent Plaintiffs Eden Rogers and 21 Brandy Welch in this case. 22 Would you please state your full name 23 again for the record. 24 Freddie Karen Busha. Α. 25 0. And what is your current address?

Page 8

Α.

Q. Have you ever had your deposition taken before?

A. No.

Q. So I'm going to ask you a series of questions today. But before we dive in, I'll just go over a couple of simple ground rules that will help us make sure things run smoothly.

First of all, please make sure that you answer audibly and verbally. Nodding your head, for instance, can't be picked up by the court reporter. Also, please wait until I've finished asking my question before you begin your answer; and likewise, I'll make sure that I wait until you've finished your answer before I ask my -- my next question.

Your attorney may object to some of my questions. If he does that, you should still answer unless he specifically instructs you not to answer. If at any point you don't understand what I'm asking you and you need clarification, please ask and I'm happy to give that to you. If you don't ask for clarification, I'll assume that you understand what I'm asking. And please -- you

Page 9

know, please direct any requests for clarification to me rather than to your lawyer.

If at any time today during the deposition you need to take a break for any reason, just let me know. I'm happy to accommodate that. I'll just ask that if there's a question pending, that you answer the question before we take a break. I'll also be mindful of timing and how long we've been going and I'll suggest, you know, breaks periodically as well.

And as you know, we are -- we're doing this deposition remotely over Zoom, so just a couple of notes regarding that. Even though we're not together in a conference room, while we are on the record you're not to communicate with anybody by any means other than this video conferencing platform. So that means -- that doesn't include during the breaks, but while we're on the record that means, you know, no e-mails, no texts, nothing like that with anybody else.

And if for any reason you have an issue with your connection and you can't see me or hear me, you know, we'll obviously take a break and make sure that we get that rectified as soon as possible. Does that all make sense? Do you have

Page 10 1 any questions with any of that? 2 Α. Yes, and no questions. 3 0. Great. You understand that your 4 testimony today is under oath and that you're being 5 videotaped? 6 Α. Yes. 7 Is there any reason that you can't Q. 8 provide truthful and accurate testimony today? Α. 9 No. 10 Are you on any medication that would 11 interfere with your ability to testify truthfully 12 today? 13 Α. No. 14 Do you have any other condition that 15 would interfere with your ability to testify 16 truthfully today? 17 Α. No. 18 Q. Great. 19 So, Serena, if we can just MS. JANSON: 20 put up Tab 47. We'll mark that as our first 21 exhibit. 22 Steve, this is just a Notice of 23 Deposition, so it doesn't have a -- have a Bates 24 number. 25 MR. MATTHEWS: Great.

	Page 11			
1	MS. JANSON: We're just marking that			
2	for housekeeping purposes.			
3	(EXHIBIT 1, Letter dated 6/15/21 from			
4	Nekki Shutt, with attached Notice of Taking			
5	Deposition of Karen Busha Via Remote Means, was			
6	marked for identification.)			
7	BY MS. JANSON:			
8	Q. So this is we're going to mark as			
9	Exhibit 1. This is the Notice of Deposition of			
10	Karen Busha Via Remote Means dated			
11	MR. MATTHEWS: Kate?			
12	MS. JANSON: Yes.			
13	MR. MATTHEWS: Excuse me one moment.			
14	When you when you turned your head away from			
15	your computer, we lost your audio a bit.			
16	MS. JANSON: Okay. I'm pulling it			
17	pulling it towards me.			
18	MR. MATTHEWS: Okay. Yeah, you weren't			
19	speaking toward the microphone and couldn't hear			
20	for a second.			
21	MS. JANSON: Okay.			
22	MR. MATTHEWS: Thank you.			
23	MS. JANSON: Sorry about that.			
24	MR. MATTHEWS: It's all right.			
25	MS. JANSON: No, I was just indicating			

Page 12 1 that we're marking as Exhibit 1 the Notice of 2 Taking of Deposition of Karen Busha By Remote Means dated June 15th, 2021. 3 4 BY MS. JANSON: 5 Miss Busha, have you seen this 0. 6 deposition notice before? 7 Α. Yes. 8 Okay. And did you receive it from --0. from Mr. Matthews? 9 10 Α. Yes. 11 Did you do anything to prepare for 0. 12 today's deposition? 13 Α. Yes. 14 What did you do to prepare? 0. 15 I met with Mr. Matthews and some of the Α. 16 leadership team from Miracle Hill Ministries. 17 Okay. And who -- who were the members Q. 18 of the Miracle Hill Ministries leadership team that 19 you met with? 20 Ryan Duerk, the CEO; Reid Lehman, the 21 former CEO; Brenda Parks, the foster care director; 22 and Sharon Betts, foster care supervisor. 23 And when -- when was that meeting? 0. 24 I can't remember. It was last week. Α. 25 Q. Okay.

Page 13 1 I don't remember which day. Α. 2 Q. Sure. No, that's fine. And was there 3 just one meeting or more than one meeting? One meeting with that group and then I 4 Α. 5 had another meeting with Mr. Matthews yesterday. 6 And approximately how long was your 7 meeting with Mr. Matthews and the group of folks from Miracle Hill? 8 9 We were there from around 9:00 till 10 noon. 11 And then your second meeting with Q. 12 Mr. Matthews yesterday, about how long was that? 13 Α. It was by phone for almost two hours. 14 Apart from the people that you've 0. 15 mentioned, was anyone else present at either of 16 those meetings? 17 Α. No. 18 Did you speak with anyone else apart Q. 19 from the folks we've talked about in preparing for 20 the deposition today? 21 Α. No. 22 Q. Did you review any documents in the 23 course of your preparation for the deposition 24 today? 25 Α. Yes.

Page 14 1 Did any of those documents that you Q. 2 looked at help refresh your recollection about past 3 events? 4 Α. Yes. 5 Are you able to tell me which documents 6 those were that refreshed your recollection of past 7 events? 8 All of the documents that you included Α. 9 in the file that you sent to me. Mr. Matthews sent 10 to me. 11 Sure. Yep. Did you look at 0. 12 anything -- anything else in advance of the 13 deposition today, any electronic databases or 14 records on your computer or anything else? 15 Α. No. 16 So just the universe of documents that 17 we had sent over to Mr. Matthews in advance? 18 Α. Yes. 19 Okay. Anything else that you did to Q. 20 prepare for the deposition today? 21 Α. No. 22 Q. Did you speak with Mr. Coleman in 23 advance of today's deposition? 24 Α. No. 25 Q. Have you ever met Mr. Coleman before,

Page 15 1 before today? 2 Α. Not face-to-face. 3 Q. You've spoken with him on the phone? 4 Α. Yes. 5 0. And when was that? 6 Α. Probably a year and a half ago, two 7 years ago. 8 Q. Was that when Mr. Coleman was a lawyer 9 representing Miracle Hill? 10 Α. Yes. 11 Q. So I'll just go through a few quick 12 background questions just about your education and 13 employment history. What is the highest level of 14 education that you obtained? 15 I have a Doctorate in Christian Α. 16 Counseling. 17 Ο. And from what institution did you 18 receive that degree? 19 Α. Omega Theological Seminary. 20 And that was in what year? Q. 21 I believe 2 -- 1998. Α. 22 Q. Okay. That's fine. Approximate is 23 And what other -- what other degrees do you fine. 24 hold? 25 I have a Master's in Education and Α.

Page 16 1 Counseling and Guidance from Clemson University 2 that I obtained in 1987. Um-hum. 3 0. And then before that do you have a Bachelor's degree as well? 4 5 Α. I do. I have a Bachelor's degree in Christian Education that I received from Irskin 6 7 College in 1979 and an Associate degree from 8 Anderson, it was college at that time, it's now 9 University, in 1977. 10 Okay. And you used to be employed at 11 Miracle Hill Ministries, is that right? 12 Α. That's correct. And when did you -- when did you leave 13 Q. 14 Miracle Hill? 15 I left Miracle Hill at the end of Α. 16 January 2021. 17 And why did you leave? Q. 18 I left primarily because I was 19 exhausted. 20 Are you employed elsewhere at this Q. 21 point or no? 22 Α. I work part-time for the Commission on 23 Accreditation of Rehab Facilities in Tucson, 24 Arizona. 25 Q. Okay.

Page 17 1 As a behavioral health program Α. 2 surveyor. 3 And at the time of your departure from 0. Miracle Hill at -- in January of this year, how 4 5 long had you been employed at Miracle Hill? 6 Α. Since August of 2018. 7 And what was your position at Miracle Q. 8 Hill when you left? 9 I was the vice president of children's 10 ministries. 11 Ο. Can you describe for us just generally 12 what your responsibilities were in that position? 13 Α. I was responsible for the overall 14 leadership for children's ministries, which 15 included four programs, our residential program for 16 children at Miracle Hill Children's Home in 17 Pumpkintown, South Carolina; I worked Miracle Hill 18 Boys' Shelter in Greenville, South Carolina; Homes 19 for Life, an independent living program for youth 20 transitioning out of DSS in Spartanburg, South 21 Carolina; and the foster care program for Miracle 22 Hill. 23 I was responsible for the direct 24 supervision of the four directors of those 25 programs. I was responsible for accreditation.

Page 18

Miracle Hill's children's ministry is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehab Facilities, better known as CARF. I was responsible for maintaining accreditation and of overseeing reaccreditation in 2020. I was responsible for program development and focused primarily on ensuring our staff and foster parents were trained in evidence-based models regarding trauma.

- Q. Okay. Great. And did you ever hold a different position at Miracle Hill before your role as vice president of children's ministries?
 - A. No.
- Q. Where were you employed before you came to Miracle Hill in 2018?
- A. I'm a retired state employee. I worked 21 years in the alcohol and drug system in South Carolina, better known as the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Studies. I worked in their private agencies, three different agencies across the state. The last ten years of my work with the State of South Carolina, I worked with Lexington County Community Mental Health in Lexington, South Carolina.
 - Q. If I use the abbreviation CPA, will you

Page 19 1 understand that I'm referring to a child placing 2 agency? 3 Α. Yes. Apart from Miracle Hill, have you ever 4 Q. 5 been employed by any other CPA in South Carolina? 6 Α. No. 7 Were you -- were you required in the Q. 8 course of your work at Miracle Hill as vice 9 president for children's -- of children's 10 ministries to complete any professional training of 11 any sort? 12 Α. Not professional training. 13 Q. Any other kind of training? 14 On-the-job training. Α. 15 And can you describe for me just Q. 16 generally what that type of training would have 17 entailed? 18 Α. A week-long orientation by Miracle 19 Hill. I also trained under the interim vice 20 president of children's ministry, Jason Mowen, 21 while at Miracle Hill, and my direct supervisor, 22 Ken Kruithof, who was the COO. 23 During the course of your work at 0. 24 Miracle Hill, did you become familiar with 25 professional standards related to child welfare?

Page 20 1 Α. Yes. 2 Ο. And what are -- what are some of those 3 standards? Α. So we had numerous professional 4 5 standards with regard to the care of children both in residential care and in foster care. We were 6 7 required to ensure that -- ensure their safety and 8 wellbeing, that they received appropriate healthcare, that they received an appropriate 9 10 education. Of course we were mandated reporters. 11 If we were aware of any abuse or neglect of 12 children, to report those to the authorities. 13 Q. Are you familiar with the Child Welfare 14 League of America standards of excellence? 15 Α. No. 16 So Miracle Hill is a private child Ο. 17 placing agency, correct? 18 Α. Correct. 19 And if you can just describe for me Q. 20 generally, what is a child placing agency in South 21 Carolina? 22 We're licensed -- we were -- Miracle 23 Hill's licensed by the Department of Social 24 Services to license foster parents to care for 25 foster children through the Department of Social

Page 21 1 Services. 2 0. And so how -- how does Miracle Hill do How does Miracle -- how does -- sorry. Let 3 that? me -- let me step back. We'll get to that in a 4 5 minute. 6 Just generally what role in the South 7 Carolina foster care system do CPAs like Miracle 8 Hill play? 9 Our main role is to place children in 10 foster homes. 11 And as part of that, does Miracle Hill 0. 12 work to recruit potential foster families? 13 Α. Yes. 14 How does Miracle Hill do that? 15 Α. Those duties were assigned to the 16 director of foster care, who would speak publicly 17 based on invitations from the community. Our web -- I believe our website also has 18 19 information on contacting us to be foster parents. 20 And the director of foster care, who 0. 21 was that? 22 Α. Brenda Parks. 23 0. Was she the person in that role for the 24 entirety of your time at Miracle Hill? 25 She was the director of foster care the Α.

Page 22 1 entire time, yes. 2 Q. And I think you said she would speak 3 publicly based on invitations from the community? 4 Α. Yes. 5 Were there certain communities within 6 the Greenville area that Miracle Hill would often 7 recruit from, like certain churches, any groups 8 like that? 9 Α. I did not have a list of where she 10 presented or recruited from. Did Miracle -- does Miracle Hill also 11 0. 12 advertise publicly beyond just its website in an 13 effort to recruit foster families? 14 I was not aware of any advertisement Α. 15 while I was at Miracle Hill. 16 Did Miracle Hill do work to support 0. 17 potential foster families as they go through the 18 application process to become licensed as foster 19 parents? 20 Α. I'm sorry, I missed part of your Could you repeat it? 21 question. 22 Q. Sure. Of course. Did Miracle Hill do 23 work to support potential foster families as they 24 go through the application process to become 25 licensed as foster parents?

Page 23

- A. We provided orientation prior to appli -- prior to application and support foster families through the licensing process once they apply.
- Q. And can you tell me a little more specifically how Miracle Hill does that? How does it support the foster families through the licensing process?
- A. I do not know the specifics of everything foster care does through that process.
- Q. Okay. Do you know whether Miracle Hill would provide any support to foster families after they're licensed?
 - A. Yes.
 - Q. And what types of supports were those?
- A. We provided case management services.

 Each family was assigned a case manager. Each

 family was also assigned a licensing specialist, so

 we assisted the families in staying in compliance

 with the Department of Social Services standards.

We also supported the family with needs that they may have regarding the children, if they need diapers or clothes. Each year we held a foster appreciate -- foster parent appreciation day where foster families could come and we would have

Page 24 1 a room set up from donations that we would receive, 2 everything from toys to clothes to blankets, to make sure that families had access to new items for 3 their children that they had in care. 4 5 You mentioned that each family would be 6 assigned a case manager. 7 Α. Yes. 8 And so that -- that person would be Ο. 9 assigned to work with the foster family as a whole 10 as opposed to being assigned to a particular child, 11 is that right? 12 Α. They were assigned to both. 13 Q. Okay. Are you familiar with the term 14 Region 1 or the upstate region? 15 Α. Yes. 16 And what -- what is the upstate region? 0. 17 It's the county -- it's -- the region Α. is assigned by DSS and it's all of the counties in 18 19 the upstate that fall under Region 1 as assigned by 20 DSS. 21 Ο. And is that the region that Miracle 22 Hill serves with respect to the foster care 23 services? 24 Yes. Α. 25 Does -- to your knowledge, does Miracle Q.

Page 25 1 Hill have any specific criteria regarding the individuals that it will work with as foster 2 3 parents? 4 Α. Yes. 5 And what are those criteria? 6 Α. There's some criteria set by the 7 Department of Social Services with regard to 8 criminal background. And Miracle Hill also has a 9 doctrinal statement and license families who align 10 with their doctrinal statement. 11 You've led perfectly into my -- into my 0. 12 next document that I'd like to look at. 13 MS. JANSON: Serena, can you please put 14 up Tab 25? This is a document called the doctrinal 15 statement and it has the Bates stamp Miracle Hill 16 Subpoena 000375. And we're -- we're marking that 17 as Exhibit 2, I believe. (EXHIBIT 2, Miracle Hill Ministries 18 19 Doctrinal Statement, MIRACLE HILL SUBP 00375, was 20 marked for identification.) 21 BY MS. JANSON: 22 Q. Miss Busha, have you seen this document 23 before? 24 Α. Yes. And is this, in fact, Miracle Hill's 25 Q.

Page 26 1 doctrinal statement that you just mentioned in your 2 prior answer? 3 Α. Yes. 4 And this document lays out the 5 religious tenets to which Miracle Hill adheres, is 6 that right? 7 Α. Yes. 8 And does Miracle Hill require that all Ο. 9 of the foster parents that it works with also agree 10 with this doctrinal statement? 11 Α. Yes. 12 Q. All right. Let's --13 MS. JANSON: Serena, let's put up Tab 14 This is going to be Exhibit 3. It is a 15 document titled Miracle Hill Ministries' Spiritual 16 Identity FAQ's and the Bates Number is Miracle Hill 17 Subpoena 012783. (EXHIBIT 3, Miracle Hill Ministries' 18 19 Spiritual Identity FAQ's, MIRACLE HILL SUBP 012783 20 to 012784, was marked for identification.) 21 MR. MATTHEWS: Kate, you did say 22 012783? 23 I did, yep. MS. JANSON: 24 MR. MATTHEWS: Great. Thank you. 25 BY MS. JANSON:

Page 27 1 Have you seen this document before? Q. 2 Α. Yes. And this appears to be a list of FAQ's, 3 0. that usually stands for frequently asked question, 4 5 that Miracle Hill published about its spiritual 6 identity, is that right? 7 I don't know the purpose of their 8 publishing this. 9 Ο. Okay. Do you see down at the bottom of 10 the first page there's a question that reads: 11 will you determine if someone meets your criteria 12 to serve as a foster parent, mentor or employee? 13 Do you see that there? 14 Α. Yes. 15 Q. And then the answer says: Our mission 16 statement and doctrinal statement of faith will 17 guide our interview process as we invite followers 18 of Jesus Christ to partner with us in ministry to 19 share the Good News of Christ and minister to the 20 needy in His name. 21 Do you see that answer there? 22 Α. Yes. 23 So does that mean that Miracle Hill 0. 24 only works with potential foster parents who are 25 followers of Jesus Christ?

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MR. MATTHEWS: Object to the form of the question. This witness is not a 30(b)(6) witness and you can't ask for Miracle Hill, but can only answer as to her understanding while she was employed there.

MS. JANSON: Fair enough. Let me rephrase.

BY MS. JANSON:

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- Q. To your knowledge, based on your work as an employee at Miracle Hill, has Miracle Hill only worked with potential foster parents who are followers of Jesus Christ?
 - A. That was my understanding, yes.
- Q. And was it also your understanding -was it your understanding then that Miracle Hill
 would not partner with members of a different faith
 to serve as foster parents?
 - A. Yes, that was my understanding.
- Q. And was it also your understanding that Miracle Hill would not partner with people who did not adhere to any faith at all as potential foster parents?
 - A. Yes, that was my understanding.
- Q. So to your under -- to your knowledge Miracle Hill would not work, for example, with

Page 29 1 potential foster parents who were Jewish, right? 2 Α. Yes, that was my understanding. 3 Or Muslim, for instance? 0. Α. Correct. 4 5 Okay. And is it correct based on your 0. 6 understanding that Miracle Hill would only work 7 with potential foster parents who were Protestant 8 Christians? This is Miles. 9 MR. COLEMAN: 10 Objection, form of the question. BY MS. JANSON: 11 12 Q. Do you want me to -- do you want me to restate it? 13 14 Α. Yes. 15 Q. Okay. Sorry. During -- during your 16 time at Miracle Hill as the vice president of 17 children's ministries, was there a policy at some 18 point that Miracle Hill would only work with 19 potential foster parents who were Protestant 20 Christians? 21 Α. For part of the time, yes. 22 Q. So for part of the time that you were 23 there, Miracle Hill would not work with Catholic 24 individuals as potential foster parents, is that 25 right?

Page 30 1 That's correct. Α. 2 Q. All right. Let's take a look at 3 another document. This is going to be Exhibit 4. Serena, it's Tab 15. And this is a document Bates 4 5 numbered Miracle Hill Subpoena 4623 and it's an e-mail chain from Miss Busha to Sharon Betts and 6 7 Brenda Parks dated January 3rd, 2019. 8 (EXHIBIT 4, E-mail chain dated 1/3/19 9 to Sharon Betts and Brenda Parks from Karen Busha, 10 MIRACLE HILL SUBP 004623 to 004626, was marked for 11 identification.) 12 BY MS. JANSON: 13 Q. Have you seen this -- this document 14 before, Miss Busha? 15 Yes. Α. 16 And, first of all, I know you -- I 17 think you mentioned her name earlier, but who is Sharon Betts? 18 19 Α. Sharon is the foster care licensing 20 supervisor for Miracle Hill. 21 And who did -- who -- who did she 22 report to or did she report to at this time? 23 Brenda Parks, the foster care director. Α. 24 Q. Okay. If you look at the last page of 25 this, of this e-mail chain, Miss Betts is writing

to a recipient whose name is redacted. And she writes: Could you tell me about your current church and involvement in the church? Is your church between pastors at the present time? Also, could blank please explain more about the time when she met Jesus for salvation?

Do you see that there at the bottom of the e-mail chain?

A. Yes.

Q. And then in response, the recipient whose -- whose name is redacted, replied with some information about their religious background and writes: I have always had a love of Jesus and always wanted to be a nun and joined a future sisters group when I was young.

And then goes on a little later to say:

My belief is that God sent his Son, Jesus, for all

who believe in Him despite the denomination or

church they attend.

Do you see that in the -- sort of in the second to last e-mail in the chain there?

- A. Yes.
- Q. And then on the page with the Bates ending in -- the Bates Number ending 4625, it's an e-mail again from Miss Betts replying. And in the

Page 32 1 top paragraph on that page she writes: However, by 2 board policy, we can only recruit and shepherd 3 foster families who are active in a Protestant This is not a judgment against Catholics. 4 church. 5 It reflects our identity as a Protestant ministry, 6 teaching traditional Protestant doctrine supported 7 by and accountable to Protestant churches. 8 Do you see that there? 9 Α. Yes. 10 And thank you for bearing with me as we Q. 11 walk through this. I just want to make sure we --12 we understand what's going on in this e-mail chain. 13 And then an e-mail right above that, 14 the recipient is responding to Miss Betts and she 15 writes: Your reply to me was very disturbing. 16 And then slightly later on it says that 17 Miss Betts' response does not -- quote: Does not 18 take into account the variations of the many 19 Protestant churches, but definitely segregates 20 Catholics. 21 Do you see that there? 22 Α. Yes. 23 And then it looks like Miss Betts 0. 24 forwarded the e-mail to -- to Reid Lehman, who then 25 would have cc'd Ken Kruithof. Am I saying his name

Page 33 1 correctly? 2 Α. Yes. 3 Kruithof? And it looks like I think 0. he -- and then he forwarded it on to you. I know 4 5 you mentioned Mr. Kruithof before and you said he 6 was your -- your direct boss as the --7 Α. Yes. 8 -- COO of Miracle Hill, is that right? 0. 9 Α. Yes, that's correct. 10 Okay. Does he still work in that Q. 11 position now? 12 Α. As far as I know, yes. 13 Q. And then after you received this chain 14 from Mr. Kruithof, you forwarded it to Miss Betts 15 and Miss Parks and you wrote: Thanks, Sharon, for 16 doing a beautiful job on this. I too am saddened 17 that they are wounded. 18 What was it about -- what did you mean 19 when you said that Miss Betts had done a beautiful 20 job? 21 It was a compliment on her 22 communication with the -- the applicant. 23 And what was it about her communication 0. 24 with the applicant that you felt warranted a 25 compliment?

Page 34 1 Α. Her attempt to manage a very painful 2 and difficult situation. 3 And why did you believe that that --0. the situation was painful and difficult? 4 5 Because the person who had submitted 6 the inquiry was wounded by -- by her response. 7 So you recognized that -- the fact that Q. 8 this recipient's application had been rejected 9 because of his or her Catholic faith had been --10 had been hurtful to them, right? 11 Α. Yes. 12 MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to 13 the form of the question. You can answer. 14 THE WITNESS: Yes. 15 MS. JANSON: Okay. I'd like to look at 16 Tab 16, Serena. And we're going to mark this one 17 as Exhibit 5, I think. And this is a document with 18 the Bates label Miracle Hill Subpoena 2366 and it's 19 an e-mail thread from Miss Busha to Mr. Kruithof 20 dated March 8th, 2019. 21 (EXHIBIT 5, E-mail chain dated 3/8/19 22 to Ken Kruithof from Karen Busha, 23 MIRACLE HILL SUBP 002366 to 002367, was marked for 24 identification.) 25 BY MS. JANSON:

Q. Are you familiar with this document?

A. Yes.

- Q. If you look at the -- at the bottom e-mail on the page marked 2366. It's -- it's Miss Betts and she is writing to a recipient whose name is redacted. And she writes: We noted that you did not include your church denomination or personal testimonies of when you met Jesus for salvation. If you would send that to us, we would be glad to let you know of the next steps in our licensing process.
 - Do you see that there?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. And then an e-mail right above, the recipient responds to Miss Betts and she says: I am confirmed Lutheran and my husband is baptized Catholic. We moved to South Carolina from Georgia this past year and have attended a nondenominational church a few times this winter.

Do you see that there?

- A. Yes.
- Q. And then you forward the e-mail chain to Mr. Kruithof and -- and you write: FYI, this is the request Sharon received that I discussed with you yesterday. Again, this was not approval to be

Page 36 1 a foster parent, but to come to orientation where 2 Brenda shares our doctrinal statement. 3 First of all, why -- why would you have discussed this particular applicant with 4 5 Mr. Kruithof? 6 Α. Because one of the applicants was 7 baptized Catholic. 8 Was it typically brought to your 0. 9 attention when an application was received from 10 somebody who was Catholic? 11 Not initially. That was a later Α. 12 request that I made that any applicants that came 13 in would be discussed with -- with me. 14 Do you know -- do you know why this 0. 15 particular application then was brought to your 16 attention? 17 Because I had requested that they be Α. 18 brought to my attention. 19 Okay. So this was after you had -- you Q. 20 made that request? 21 I believe so. 22 Q. Okay. And when you brought this 23 application to Mr. Kruithof's attention, do you 24 remember whether you had a discussion with him 25 about it in particular?

Page 37 I don't remember the particular Α. discussion. And you don't remember what he would 0. have said about this application? Α. Because we invited them to orientation, we were moving forward with the app -- with the That was the next step in the process. inquiry. Okay. So at this time in March of 0. 2019, in order to work with Miracle Hill as prospective -- as potential foster parents, did both spouses who were applying have to be Protestant Christians? Α. I don't recall the date that Miracle Hill changed their policy. MS. JANSON: Okay. Let's see here. Serena, why don't -- why don't we look at Tab 27. And this is a document bearing the Bates Number Miracle Hill Subpoena 244. This will be Exhibit 6. And it's a document, a press release, titled Miracle Hill Ministries Strengthens Christian Identity by Opening Foster Program to Catholic Foster Care Parents. (EXHIBIT 6, Document entitled Miracle Hill Ministries Strengthens Christian Identity by

Opening Foster Programs to Catholic Foster Parents,

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Page 38 1 MIRACLE HILL SUBP 000244 to 000245, was marked for 2 identification.) BY MS. JANSON: 3 4 Do you have that in front of you, Q. 5 Miss Busha? 6 Α. Yes, I do. 7 And do you recognize this document? Q. 8 Α. Yes. 9 Ο. If you look at the -- at the very top 10 in the first paragraph there, it's dated July 5th, Do you see that? 11 2019. 12 Α. Yes. 13 Q. So is it fair to say that it was right 14 around that period in -- in early July of 2019 when 15 Miracle Hill changed its policy to open the foster 16 care program to Catholic foster parents? 17 Α. I don't remember the date it was 18 actually changed. This was the press release. 19 Okay. So if we go back to -- to Q. 20 Exhibit 5, that was the e-mail thread with the 21 Bates Number 2366. 22 Α. Yes. 23 Ο. And that was dated March 8th, 2019, 24 right? 25 Α. Yes.

- Q. So it was -- it was several months in advance of the press release that went out announcing Miracle Hill's change in policy to work with Catholics as potential foster parents, right?
 - A. Yes.

- Q. Okay. So just to revisit my -- my prior question. Do you know whether in March of 2019 Miracle Hill would have required both members of a couple who were applying to be potential -- to be foster parents to be Protestant Christians?
- A. I don't believe so, that we would have required both to be Protestant Christians at that point.
- Q. Okay. So in this e-mail chain in Exhibit 5, the recipient says that he or she was Lutheran. Is Lutheran -- do you consider Lutheranism to be Protestant denominations?
- A. I'm -- I'm not an expert on Protestant denominations.
- Q. Okay. So you don't -- you don't have an understanding one way or the other as to whether Lutheranism is considered Protestant?
 - A. No.
- Q. Okay. Now, this application -- I think you said earlier the next step in the process with

Page 40 1 this application was that they would come to an 2 orientation with Miracle Hill, is that right? 3 Α. Yes. And why was it then that this couple 4 5 who is described in the e-mail chain here that's Exhibit 5 was invited to an orientation whereas the 6 7 applicant who we looked at in Exhibit 4 was -- had 8 their -- had their application rejected outright? 9 Do you have an understanding of that? 10 I don't know which applicant you're 11 talking about that was rejected. 12 Sorry, that was -- that's the document 13 that we marked as Exhibit 4. It has the Bates 14 Number 4623. I do not know. 15 Α. 16 Okay. Looking back then at Exhibit 5, 17 which is the document with the Bates Number 2366. 18 And thank you for -- for bearing with me as we flip 19 back and forth among all these documents. 20 it gets a little confusing. 21 Do you -- without disclosing their 22 identities, do you happen to recall who the 23 applicants that were involved in this e-mail chain, 24 who they were? 25 Α. No.

Page 41 1 Q. Looking at that same document. Okay. 2 The very last line of Miss Betts' original -- her 3 original e-mail, so this is the page marked 2367, she writes: Thank you for your interest 4 5 specifically in a teenager who is in group care. These children need foster homes too. 6 7 MR. MATTHEWS: Hold on one moment, 8 She needs to find that document. Kate. 9 MS. JANSON: Sure. 10 MR. MATTHEWS: Yes. Second page. 11 sorry, if -- if you would repeat that last part of 12 your question. 13 BY MS. JANSON: 14 Yeah, of course. So if you look at the 0. second page of the document with the Number 2367 at 15 16 the bottom, the first line there is an e-mail 17 from -- it's Miss Betts' original e-mail and she 18 writes: Thank you for your interest specifically 19 in a teenager who is in group care. These children 20 need foster homes too. 21 Do you see that? Yes, I see that. 22 Α. 23 Okay. Does -- does Miracle Hill run --0. 24 run a group home? 25 Α. Not today.

		Page 42	
1	Q.	Did it previously?	
2	А.	Yes.	
3	Q.	And was that home called the Miracle	
4	Hill Childre	en's Home?	
5	А.	That was one of the group homes.	
6	Q.	Was there another one?	
7	А.	Yes.	
8	Q.	And what was that one called?	
9	А.	The Miracle Hill Boys' Shelter and	
10	Homes for Life.		
11	Q.	So there were three total?	
12	А.	Yes.	
13	Q.	Are any of the to your knowledge,	
14	are any of the three still open today?		
15	А.	No.	
16	Q.	When when did Miracle Hill stop	
17	running the	Miracle Hill Children's Home?	
18	А.	2020.	
19	Q.	Okay. And how about the Miracle Hill	
20	Boys' Shelte	er?	
21	А.	The end of 2020.	
22	Q.	And how about Homes for Life?	
23	А.	I believe that was in 2019.	
24	Q.	What is your understanding as to why	
25	Miracle Hill	l stopped running the Miracle Hill	

Page 43 1 Children's Home? 2 Lack of referrals from the Department of Social Services. 3 4 Does that mean there weren't enough Ο. 5 children to house them in the home? 6 Α. Yes. We didn't have enough referrals 7 to house children. 8 Q. Okay. 9 Serve children. We didn't want to 10 house children, serve them. 11 Of course. That's a -- yeah, poor 0. 12 choice of words on my -- on my part. I understand. 13 And how about the Boys' Shelter, was it -- was it 14 the same reason? 15 Α. Yes. 16 And what about Homes for Life? 17 was the reason to your understanding that that closed? 18 19 That was the same reason. Α. 20 And before -- before it was closed 0. 21 during the time when you worked at Miracle Hill, do 22 you have an understanding of approximately how many 23 children resided in the Miracle Hill Children's 24 Home at any given time? 25 We had the -- we were licensed for 44

Page 44 1 beds. 2 Q. Do you know -- do you know how many of 3 those -- of those beds were -- you know, were filled, for lack of a better word, during your time 4 5 at Miracle Hill? I don't recall the exact numbers. 6 Α. 7 Do you have a general sense of what Q. 8 proportion of the children who were served through 9 the Miracle Hill Children's Home were teenagers? 10 Α. I don't have those statistics. 11 Not looking for precise numbers, but do 0. 12 you have a general sense? Was it half of the kids, 13 was it 75 percent of the kids, any sort of ballpark 14 kind of understanding you can give me? 15 Α. My best recollection would be probably 16 about half of the children at the children's home. 17 Do you have a sense of how many at the 0. Boys' Shelter approximately would have been 18 19 teenagers? 20 Probably 99 percent of the youth there. Α. 21 Ο. Okay. Is it right that the South 22 Carolina Department of Social Services is the 23 entity that would make the ultimate decision 24 regarding placement of children in foster homes? 25 Is that right?

Page 45 1 They have the ultimate Α. Yes. 2 responsibility. 3 And to your knowledge, based on your 0. role at Miracle Hill, what role or what involvement 4 5 did Miracle Hill have in the placement process for children that resided in its group homes? 6 7 Could you ask me that question again, 8 please? 9 Q. Sure. Sure. To your knowledge, did 10 Miracle Hill play a role in the placement process 11 for children that resided in its group homes? 12 Α. Yes. 13 Q. And what was that role? 14 DSS would contact us when they had a Α. 15 child who needed residential care, and that child 16 would be screened for admission and admitted. 17 Okay. And was it -- was it the Ο. 18 ultimate goal that the children who were in Miracle 19 Hill's children's homes would ultimately be placed 20 with a foster family? 21 Yes, and are reunited with their 22 family. 23 Okay. With their family of origin, Q. 24 right? 25 Α. Yes. Yes, ma'am.

- Q. And did -- did Miracle Hill play a role in the process by which children who lived in one of its group homes were placed with a foster family?
 - A. Yes.

- Q. And generally speaking, what -- what was that role that Miracle Hill played in that process?
- A. Our residential directors and the foster care director would communicate about open -- open homes that may be good placements for our children. Of course DSS was involved in that conversation as well to see if the child could be moved from group care to foster care.
- Q. Okay. And in your experience, is it typically more difficult to find foster parents who are willing to foster teenagers?
 - A. Yes.
 - Q. Why -- why do you think that is?
- A. I think that teenagers, because they had been oftentimes in the system of DSS a very long time and they've often been moved from foster home to foster home, they have more challenging behaviors and some foster families are not equipped to manage those behaviors.

Q. Okay. Thank you. Okay. So we already marked as Exhibit 6 the press release where Miracle Hill announced its change in policy to start working with -- with Catholics as potential foster parents. That's the document with the Bates number ending 244. And I just want to take -- I just want to take a closer look at that for a minute.

If you look down in the one, two,
three, fourth paragraph of that press release,
it's -- it mentions a lawsuit filed by Aimee
Madonna that gave the impression that Miracle Hill
was in a dispute with other followers of Jesus
Christ. Are you familiar at all with the lawsuit
mentioned there that was filed by a plaintiff named
Aimee Madonna?

- A. I am not familiar with the lawsuit. I have heard her name.
- Q. And in what -- in what context have you heard her name?

MR. MATTHEWS: I'm going to object to the extent that that asks for attorney/client privileged information. To the extent that the witness' knowledge of Aimee Madonna relates to information she heard from an attorney, either for herself or for Miracle Hill, it would be privileged

Page 48 1 and I will instruct her not to answer. 2 extent that she has knowledge that is derived from 3 some other source other than an attorney representing her or Miracle Hill, she can answer 4 5 the question. 6 THE WITNESS: Could you repeat the 7 question? 8 BY MS. JANSON: Sure. My question was just in what 9 Q. 10 context had you heard Aimee Madonna's name? 11 In conversation with Brenda Parks, the Α. 12 foster care director, she had mentioned her name. 13 Q. Do you remember anything more about 14 what Miss Parks had told you about Aimee Madonna? 15 Α. No. 16 Do you have any understanding of what 17 it means here in the press release that the lawsuit 18 filed by Miss Madonna, quote, gave the impression 19 that Miracle Hill Ministries was in a dispute with 20 other followers of Jesus Christ? 21 My recollection is that this was 22 referring to being in dispute with a Catholic 23 church. 24 Q. Okay. I think we touched on when we 25 first marked this -- with this document earlier.

Page 49 This press release is announcing that Miracle Hill has opened the door for Catholics as foster parents and to work with Miracle Hill as prospective foster parents, is that right? Α. Yes. 0. To your knowledge, though, would prospective -- prospective foster parents who are Catholic still be required to agree with Miracle Hill's doctrinal statement? That's the document that we looked at earlier and that we marked as Exhibit 2. Α. Yes. And the press release, in fact, reflects that it states that Christians who share a commitment to the gospel and embrace our doctrinal statement and belief and practice are valued ministry partners in employment and in fostering, is that right? You're reading that from the doctrinal Α. statement? Ο. No, that comes from the -- that comes from the press release. Can you repeat the question, please? Α. Q. Sure. I'm just looking for the

Actually, let's -- let's skip that one

language.

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Page 50 1 and move on. 2 So as we discussed -- as we discussed 3 before Miracle Hill's doctrinal statement, and that is the document we marked as Exhibit 2 with the 4 5 Bates number ending 375, does that -- that doctrinal statement sets out Miracle Hill's 6 7 religious beliefs, right? 8 Α. Yes. 9 And is it fair to describe those 10 beliefs as Evangelical Protestant belief? 11 Α. Yes. 12 MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to 13 the form of the question. 14 BY MS. JANSON: 15 Q. And the doctrinal statement required, 16 for example, if you look at -- let's see, one, two, three, four, five, six, the seventh statement in 17 18 the doctrinal statement, it says: We believe that 19 the Holy Spirit unites all believers in the Lord 20 Jesus Christ and together they form one body, the 21 church. 22 Do you see that there? 23 Α. Yes. 24 Do you have any understanding as to Q. 25 whether practicing Catholics would typically agree

Page 51 1 that, quote, all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ 2 form -- together form the church? 3 I don't know. Α. All right. Let's look at -- Serena, 4 5 let's look at Tab 30. This is a document with the Bates Number Miracle Hill Subpoena 4467. We're 6 7 going to mark it as Exhibit 7. And it is a e-mail 8 thread between Reid Lehman and Miss Busha and 9 others dated September 24th, 2019. 10 (EXHIBIT 7, E-mail chain dated 9/24/19 11 to Karen Busha and Ken Kruithof from Reid Lehman, 12 MIRACLE HILL SUBP 004467 to 004470, was marked for 13 identification.) 14 BY MS. JANSON: 15 Q. Have you seen -- have you seen this 16 e-mail chain before, Miss Busha? 17 Α. Yes. 18 If you turn to the last page of the 19 chain, it's the page with the Bates Number 4469. 20 That is -- that is an e-mail from Sharon Betts and she is writing to a recipient whose name is 21 22 redacted. 23 She writes: Thank you for your recent 24 inquiry into our foster parent program. Since you 25 read our doctrinal statement on the website when

Page 52 1 you inquired, I have a few additional questions for 2 each of you. 3 And I think by each of you there, she's referring to the foster applicants whose names are 4 5 redacted. And then she lists -- lists four 6 questions there. At this time, this is September 7 of 2019, were -- were those questions that Miracle 8 Hill asked of all the applicants that were 9 interested in working with Miracle Hill as foster 10 parents? 11 I don't know. Α. 12 Q. You don't know whether those were 13 questions that were reserved for Catholic 14 applicants? 15 MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Objection 16 to the form of the question. 17 BY MS. JANSON: 18 Q. Would you like me to repeat it? 19 Α. My recollection was that all applicants 20 were to be questioned the same. There was to be no 21 difference. 22 Ο. No difference between Catholic 23 applicants and Protestant applicants? 24 Α. Neither of the applicant, correct. 25 Q. Okay. So if you look at the next page

Page 53 1 of the document with the Bates number ending 44 --2 4468, it looks there -- and I won't read it all, 3 but it looks like the applicant has provided her answers to Miss Betts' questions. 4 5 And then on the first page of the 6 e-mail chain at the very bottom, Miss Betts 7 forwards the answers to Miss Parks and she says: 8 Here are the Catholic lady's answers. And then it looks like just above that, ultimately those 9 10 answers were forwarded on to you. Is that an 11 accurate description --12 Α. Yes. 13 Q. -- of what's going on here? 14 Α. Yes. 15 Q. Do you remember why it was that the 16 Catholic lady's answers to those questions would 17 have been forwarded to you? 18 I had requested the applicants be 19 forwarded to me. 20 The applications from Catholic 0. 21 prospective foster parents, right? 22 Α. Yes. 23 Okay. Great. And then you forward --0. 24 you forward the e-mail chain to Mr. Lehman and 25 Mr. Kruithof, and you write: You may not want this

Page 54 1 much detail, but I'm delighted to share we have had 2 our first inquiry from a woman who is a DSS 3 employee and works with Miracle Hill fostering. She is Catholic and her husband is Baptist. Brenda 4 5 and I felt good about her responses below and will 6 be taking next steps with her regarding our 7 doctrinal statement and application. 8 Why was it that you had forwarded this 9 information about this applicant to -- to 10 Mr. Lehman, who at the time I believe was the 11 president and CEO of Miracle Hill, is that right? 12 Α. That's correct. 13 Q. And why was it that you forwarded the 14 information about this applicant to Mr. Lehman? 15 Because he and Mr. Kruithof had asked Α. 16 me to keep them informed if we received Catholic 17 applicants because we were excited to have them 18 join us in foster care. 19 And then Mr. Lehman writes back to you 0. 20 and to Mr. Kruithof and he cc's someone named 21 Sandra Furnell and he writes: Praise God. 22 this prove to be an application we can move forward 23 with. Thanks for letting us know. 24 First of all, who -- who is Sandra

Furnell?

- A. At that time she was the communication director for Miracle Hill Ministries.
- Q. Do you know why Mr. Lehman would have cc'd her on this e-mail?
- A. Miss Furnell was part of the -- my understanding is that Miss Furnell was part of the -- my understanding is that Miss Furnell was part of the communication that went out in the press release, that was part of her job duties. I can't speak to why Mr. Lehman would forward it to her.
- Q. Okay. Do you know whether Miss Furnell in her role as a communications director ever incorporated foster parent applicants' stories into Miracle Hill's like press releases or PR materials?
 - A. I'm not aware of -- of what she did.
- Q. Okay. And in your e-mail where you forwarded this to Mr. Lehman and Mr. Kruithof, you noted that -- that you would be taking the next steps with the applicant regarding the doctrinal statement and application. Do you -- without -- of course without revealing their identity, do you remember this particular applicant, who they were?
- A. No, I don't -- don't recall who they were.

Page 56 Do you remember whether -- whether Q. Miracle Hill did, in fact, move forward with this applicant in the next step in the application process? The applicant was given the -- the inquirer was given the opportunity to come to orientation to do the application. I do not know if they followed through. Q. Okay. So you don't ultimately know if they signed the doctrinal statement, for instance? I don't -- I don't know for this applicant, no. This inquirer, no. Q. Okay. You don't know ultimately what ended up happening with them, whether they became licensed or anything beyond what's in the e-mail? Α. No. MS. JANSON: Okay. All right. So it's about 10:15. We've been going for, you know, about an hour and a quarter. This would be a good time for a break from -- from my end if that's okay with you. THE WITNESS: Yes. Thank you. Why don't we -- why MS. JANSON: Sure.

don't we take a break and come back at 10:30.

VIDEO TECHNICIAN:

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The time is 10:17

Page 57 1 We are going off the record. AM. 2 (A recess transpired.) 3 VIDEO TECHNICIAN: The time is 10:31 AM. We are back on the record. 4 5 BY MS. JANSON: Okay. So let's -- let's take a look at 6 Ο. 7 This is an e-mail with the Bates Number 8 Miracle Hill Subpoena 2572. We're going to mark this as Exhibit 8 and it's an e-mail chain from 9 Miss Busha to Brenda Parks dated December 19, 2019. 10 11 (EXHIBIT 8, E-mail chain dated 12/19/19 12 to Brenda Parks from Karen Busha, 13 MIRACLE HILL SUBP 002572 to 002574, was marked for 14 identification.) 15 BY MS. JANSON: 16 Do you recognize this document? Ο. 17 Α. Yes. 18 If you flip over to the second page of 19 the document with the Page 57 -- or the Page Number 20 2573 at the bottom. You write there to Miss Parks in the second paragraph: Sharon is requesting 21 22 training on how to interview foster families that 23 are Catholic. 24 Do you see that there? 25 Α. Yes.

Page 58 1 And the Sharon that you're referring Q. 2 to, is that Miss Betts? 3 Α. Yes. And then on the first page of the 4 Q. 5 document, Miss Parks replies to you and she says: She's wanting staff to feel more 6 Yes, ma'am. 7 comfortable when discussing with the potential foster families. 8 9 And then it looks like the two of you, 10 Miss -- you and Miss Parks, set up a phone call to 11 talk about it the next day. Do you remember if you 12 actually had a -- had that phone call? 13 Α. No, I don't -- I don't remember. 14 Did Brenda ever explain to you -- I'm 0. 15 sorry, Miss Parks. Did she ever explain to you 16 what she meant by Miss Betts' wanting staff to feel 17 more comfortable interviewing foster families that are Catholic? 18 19 Did -- can you ask me that question Α. 20 again, please? 21 Sure. Did Miss Parks ever explain to 22 you what she meant when she referred to Miss Betts 23 wanting staff to feel more comfortable interviewing 24 foster families that are Catholic?

My understanding from Mrs. Parks was

Α.

that Miss Betts and some of the staff who had been with Miracle Hill a long time needed more support in adjusting to the change in the organization's policy.

- Q. And can you tell me -- can you say a little bit more about that? What was your understanding of why they felt that they needed -- some of the staff felt that they needed more support in adjusting to the change -- the change in policy whereby Miracle Hill would work with Catholics as prospective foster parents?
- A. I really did not understand their struggle, not having their background with the ministry. My goal was to ensure that everyone was treated equally as far as whether it was a Catholic or a Protestant, that they were all treated equally and that there was no difference in how they were treated.
- Q. Did you have a sense that there were employees at Miracle Hill who disagreed with the policy change whereby Miracle Hill started working with Catholics as prospective foster parents?
- A. I wasn't aware of anyone who disagreed directly.
 - Q. Anyone who disagreed indirectly?

- A. No. I wasn't aware of anyone that disagreed.
- Q. Okay. Let's take a look at Tab 44.

 And this is an e-mail with the Bates Number Miracle

 Hill Subpoena 2576. We're going to mark this as

 Exhibit 9. And it's an e-mail chain between Reid

 Lehman to Miss Busha and Miss Parks dated January

 9th of 2020.
- (EXHIBIT 9, E-mail chain dated 1/9/20 to Brenda Parks and Karen Busha from Reid Lehman, MIRACLE_HILL_SUBP_002576 to 002577, was marked for identification.)
- 13 BY MS. JANSON:

- Q. Do you recognize this -- this e-mail chain?
- A. Yes.
 - Q. And in the second e-mail there on the first page of the document, Miss Parks writes that she met with the licensing staff about engaging with members of the Catholic faith and others. As stated, I reviewed the doctrinal statement and presented them with the questions that are used for interviewing applicants. I believe it was well received and advised them that I would be happy to accompany them to any meeting with a potential

applicant with whom they were uncomfortable.

And then Mr. Lehman responds and he writes: Good work. Thanks for working to help free up our foster care staff to be more open in their consideration.

Do you remember whether -- or do you know whether Miss Parks' meeting that she's referring to here with the licensing staff, did that develop as a result of the e-mail discussion that you and she had had in the prior exhibit that we talked about?

- A. No, I don't know.
- Q. Okay. And the reference here to -- in Miss Parks' e-mail to questions that are used for interviewing applicants, are those questions that were directed only at nonProtestant applicants for foster care?
- A. All of the -- all of the applicants were to be interviewed the same.
- Q. Okay. So there's a standard set of questions that the Miracle Hill licensing staff would use when they're interviewing an applicant regardless whether that applicant identified themselves as Protestant or Catholic?
 - A. I don't remember if a set of questions

was -- was established. I do know that all applicants -- staff were instructed that all applicants were to be interviewed the same.

Q. Okay. Do you know whether -Miss Parks indicates in her e-mail that she told
the licensing staff that she would be happy to
accompany them to any meeting with a potential
applicant with whom they were uncomfortable.

Do you know if Miss Parks ever had to accompany a member of the licensing staff to meet with a potential applicant with whom they were uncomfortable?

- A. No, I don't know.
- Q. And looking back at Mr. Lehman's e-mail at the top of the document, do you have an understanding of what he meant when he wrote thanks for working to help free up our foster care staff to be more open in their consideration?
 - A. No, I don't know what he meant.
- Q. Okay. All right. So after Miracle
 Hill made -- made its policy change to begin
 working with Catholics as prospective foster
 parents, do you know whether Miracle Hill has, in
 fact, worked with prospective foster parents that
 are Catholic and had them follow through the

Page 63 1 process to becoming licensed? 2 Α. When I left Miracle Hill, we had one Catholic family that was licensed that I was aware 3 of. 4 5 And so that Catholic family that became Ο. 6 licensed would have had to sign on to Miracle 7 Hill's doctrinal statement, right? 8 Α. That's correct. 9 Ο. Just ballpark, approximately how many 10 families would you say -- prospective foster 11 families does Miracle Hill work with per year? 12 When I was there, it was around 200. Α. 13 Ο. And is that -- is that the number that 14 are licensed? 15 Α. Yes. 16 Okay. So it would -- it might be a Ο. 17 larger number if you were talking about the number 18 of initial inquiries that Miracle Hill would 19 receive, right? 20 MR. MATTHEWS: Object to the form of 21 the question. I think you all are passing each 22 other in what you're asking and answering. 23 BY MS. JANSON: 24 Q. Okay. So, Miss Busha, you said -- I 25 asked approximately how many families would you

Page 64 1 say -- approximately how many prospective foster 2 families does Miracle Hill work with per year and 3 you said when I was there, it was around 200. So what I'm trying to understand is, is 4 5 200 the number of families who are actually licensed to be foster families that Miracle Hill 6 7 works with in a given year or is it a different -or is that a different number? 8 9 I misunderstood the question when 10 you -- I missed the word prospective. The 200 11 number or the number of licensed foster parents with Miracle Hill, not those who have inquired. 12 13 Q. Okay. Do you have -- do you have a 14 sense of approximately how many new inquiries from 15 prospective foster families Miracle Hill gets in a 16 given year? 17 Α. No. I do not know. 18 Q. Okay. And we covered this earlier, but 19 it's correct that Miracle Hill will not work with 20 any nonChristians as -- who are interested in 21 pursuing foster care, right? 22 Α. That's my understanding. 23 Okay. And would that be true even if a 0. 24 nonChristian applicant agreed to sign Miracle

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Hill's doctrinal statement?

- A. If -- it isn't just signing the statement, it is living the statement.
- Q. I've seen language in a document, and I can't point to it right now, but I think the phrase was that applicants need to agree to the doctrinal statement in belief and practice, right?
 - A. That was my understanding.
- Q. Okay. Are you aware that the Plaintiffs in this litigation are Eden Rogers and Brandy Welch?
 - A. I am aware of them, yes.
- Q. And at some point in 2019, Miracle Hill received an inquiry from Miss Rogers and Miss Welch about becoming potential foster parents, is that right?
 - A. That's correct.
- Q. Let's look at Tab 20. This is a document with the Bates Number Miracle Hill Subpoena 00593. We're going to mark this as Exhibit 10. And this is a foster care inquiry form that was submitted via Miracle Hill's website by Brandy Welch on April 29th -- I'm sorry, April 28th, 2019.
- (EXHIBIT 10, E-mail dated 4/28/19 to Sharon Betts, Brenda Parks and Yvette Bates from

Page 66 1 Brandy Welch, MIRACLE HILL SUBP 000593 to 000594, was marked for identification.) 2 BY MS. JANSON: 3 Have you seen this document before, 4 Q. 5 Miss Busha? 6 Α. Not until you sent it to me. 7 Okay. And does this, in fact, appear Q. 8 to be the foster care inquiry form that Brandy 9 Welch submitted on the Miracle Hill website? 10 I have -- I did not see the inquiries 11 submitted by Miss Welch on the website. 12 Okay. We'll just look at a couple -- a Q. 13 couple sections of it. If you look about halfway 14 down the page, it looks like Miss Welch identifies 15 her spouse as Eden Rogers. Do you see that there? 16 Α. Yes. 17 0. And then at the bottom of the page the 18 question is asked: Why I want to be a foster 19 parent, check all that apply. And it looks like 20 Brandy checked I would like to help a child do 21 something good with his/her life and I know there 22 are children who need homes and I think I should 23 help. 24 And then below that she writes as an 25 additional reason: Even if it is for a short

period of time, we would like for more children to know what it feels like to be unconditionally loved and to be part of a loving family. We can provide a safe and loving environment.

Do you see that there?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And then in the bottom section of the application, it asks: Please give a brief personal testimony of your faith/salvation in Jesus Christ. If you are married, please indicate your spouse's testimony as well.

And Brandy provides an answer there.

She writes: My wife and I have very similar testimonies. We were both raised in Christian homes and were both active in church through our childhood and teenage years. I was part of a Presbyterian church and my wife was part of a Baptist church. As we have had life experiences and grown into the people we are today and as a same sex couple, we feel comfortable with the Unitarian Universalist Church here locally, which embraces diverse religious backgrounds. For us, the core religious value of love is most important.

A. Yes.

Do you see that there?

Page 68 1 Do you know whether Miracle Hill's Q. 2 foster care inquiry form on its website is the same 3 today as it was in April of 2019 when Miss Welch submitted it? 4 5 Α. I do not know. Okay. You don't know whether there has 6 7 been any changes to the -- to the inquiry form on the website made since then? 8 9 Α. That's correct, I do not know if there 10 have been any changes to the form. 11 Okay. All right. Let's look at Tab 1. 0. 12 This is going to be Exhibit 11. And it's Bates 13 numbered Miracle Hill Subpoena 6977. So this -- so 14 this is a -- an undated note that's signed by 15 Sharon Betts and it appears to be a summary of a 16 conversation that Miss Betts had with Miss Welch. 17 (EXHIBIT 11, Statement, 18 MIRACLE HILL SUBP 006977, was marked for 19 identification.) 20 BY MS. JANSON: 21 Have you seen this document -- have you 22 seen this document before? 23 I don't recall having seen this 24 document. 25 And in the document Miss Betts Q. Okay.

writes that Miss Welch -- and this is approximately a third of the way through the -- the big paragraph on the page. Miss Welch said that she has a wife. She said, does your website indicate what type of families you work with? Would we be disqualified? And then Miss Betts writes: I said, I am not sure that is specifically addressed.

To your knowledge, Miss Busha, does Miracle Hill work with same sex couples who are interested in becoming foster parents?

- A. It's my understanding they do not.
- Q. So you're not aware of Miracle Hill ever having worked with a same sex couple that was interested in fostering?
 - A. I am not aware of any, that's correct.
- Q. So that means Miracle Hill would not work with a same sex couple even if that couple signed on to Miracle Hill's doctrinal statement?
 - A. That's my understanding.
- Q. Do you know whether Miracle Hill would work with a lesbian, gay or bisexual individual?

MR. COLEMAN: Object to the form of the question. This is Miles.

- 24 BY MS. JANSON:
 - Q. You can answer.

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A. It's my understanding they would not based on the practice of the doctrinal statement.

- Q. Let's -- let's look back at the doctrinal statement just for a minute if we can. That was Exhibit 2. And it's the document with the Bates number ending 375. If you were to take a look at the doctrinal statement and then point me to where -- to what it is in the doctrinal statement that leads you to your understanding that Miracle Hill would not work with lesbian, gay or bisexual individuals as prospective foster parents.
- A. I couldn't state on what Miracle

 Hill -- which of these beliefs Miracle Hill would

 identify as the reason they will not work with that
 population.
- Q. But it's -- nonetheless, it's your understanding that Miracle Hill does not work with lesbian, gay or bisexual individuals as well as same sex couples, right?

MR. COLEMAN: Object to the form of the question. This is Miles. You can answer.

THE WITNESS: As foster parents.

23 BY MS. JANSON:

Q. Okay. All right, let's look at Tab 22.

This is going to be Exhibit 12 and it's Bates

Page 71 1 numbered Miracle Hill Subpoena 12572. 2 (EXHIBIT 12, E-mail chain dated 5/1/19 3 to Sharon Betts, Reid Lehman, Karen Busha and Brenda Parks from Sandra Furnell, 4 5 MIRACLE HILL SUBP 012572 to 12573, was marked for 6 identification.) 7 BY MS. JANSON: 8 So this is an e-mail chain, the top Ο. e-mail which is from Sandra Furnell to Sharon 9 10 Betts, Reid Lehman, Karen Busha and Brenda Parks 11 dated May 1st, 2019. Do you recognize this 12 document? 13 Α. Yes. 14 Do you remember it from the time that 0. 15 it was sent or from your preparation for the 16 deposition? 17 I recall it from the time it was sent. Α. 18 Q. Okay. If you look at the first e-mail 19 in the chain on the second page of the document, 20 it's from Miss Betts and she writes: Please find 21 the latest version of our response letter to 22 Miss Welch/Miss Rogers. Your feedback is greatly 23 appreciated. 24 Do you know why Miss Betts was asking 25 for feedback on the response letter to Miss Welch

Page 72 1 and Miss Rogers from this group? 2 Α. No. Was it typical -- was it typical when 3 0. an applicant -- when Miracle Hill denied a foster 4 5 care applicant that Miss Betts would reach out to 6 this group for feedback? 7 There were times that they would reach 8 out to me to review documentation, but I can't 9 recall if it was related to the licensing of a 10 foster family. 11 Okay. So you don't -- you don't have 0. 12 an understanding of what it was about Miss Rogers' 13 and Miss Welch's application that led Miss Betts to 14 ask for feedback on her response from this group? 15 Α. I can't speak for Miss Betts and the 16 motive that she had to send this to us. 17 Okay. Do you -- did you, in fact, Q. 18 provide any feedback to Miss Betts on the draft 19 response that she sent? 20 I don't recall giving any feedback. Α. 21 And in that same e-mail, the first 22 e-mail in this chain, Miss Betts writes we need to 23 get this out today and with an exclamation point 24 and today is written in in all capitals.

Do you know why there was a rush to get

Page 73 1 the response out to Miss Rogers and Miss Welch on May 1st of 2019? 2 3 I do not recall. Α. Okay. All right. Let's look at Tab 4 Q. 5 21. This is going to be Exhibit 13 and it's Bates marked Miracle Hill Subpoena 592. We're going to 6 7 mark this as Exhibit 13. 8 (EXHIBIT 13, E-mail dated 5/1/19 from 9 Sharon Betts, MIRACLE HILL SUBP 000592, was marked 10 for identification.) BY MS. JANSON: 11 12 Q. It's an e-mail from Sharon Betts to 13 Miss Rogers and Miss Welch dated May 1st, 2019. 14 Have you seen this document before? 15 Α. Yes. 16 And when did you see this document? 0. 17 I'm assuming May 1st of 2019. Α. 18 Q. Did Miss Betts forward to you this 19 document on May 1st, 2019? 20 I don't recall if she only forwarded me Α. 21 the draft copy or the finalized copy. I don't 22 recall. 23 Okay. Did this appear to be the -- the 0. 24 final response letter that was -- that was sent to 25 Miss Rogers and Miss Welch?

Page 74 1 Α. Yes. 2 Q. And in the second paragraph there 3 starting in the first sentence, Miss Betts writes: You stated in your inquiry that you attend the 4 5 Unitarian Universalist Church and that you are in 6 agreement with our doctrinal statement. 7 Do you see that there? 8 Α. Yes. And then it goes on to say: 9 Ο. 10 Unitarian Universalist Church, however, does not 11 align with traditional Christian doctrine and 12 thereby would not be considered a Christian church. 13 Do you see that? 14 Α. Yes. 15 Q. Do you know whether Miracle Hill, 16 Miss Betts or anyone else at Miracle Hill conducted 17 any research into what the beliefs or the tenets of the Unitarian Universalist faith were? 18 19 I do not know. Α. 20 Do you know how Miss Betts determined 0. 21 that the Unitarian Universalist faith did not align 22 with traditional Christian doctrine? 23 I do not know. Α. 24 Q. Do you have any view personally about 25 whether the Unitarian Universalist faith aligns

Page 75 1 with traditional Christian doctrine? 2 Α. I do not. 3 She notes in that first sentence of the 0. e-mail that Eden -- that Miss Rogers and Miss Welch 4 5 were in agreement with Miracle Hill's doctrinal statement, but, nonetheless, Miss Betts indicates 6 7 here that Miracle Hill's view was that the 8 Unitarian Universalist Church did not align with 9 traditional Christian doctrine, right? 10 Α. That's what the letter states. 11 So that suggests then that Miracle 0. 12 Hill's view of the Unitarian Universalist faith 13 was -- was determinative here, right? 14 MR. COLEMAN: Object to the form of the 15 question. This is Miles. 16 THE WITNESS: I don't know how it was 17 determined. BY MS. JANSON: 18 19 Okay. What I'm trying to get at is Q. 20 Miss Rogers and Miss Welch indicated in their -- on 21 their inquiry form that they were in agreement with 22 Miracle Hill's doctrinal statement, which as we've 23 discussed is a requirement for prospective foster 24 parents, but Miss Betts' e-mail indicates that 25 Miracle Hill had determined that the Universal --

Page 76 1 Unitarian Universalist faith was not a 2 traditional -- did not align with traditional 3 Christian doctrine and that is the reason that she cites for denying their application. 4 5 So my -- so my question is, is simply does it appear to you from reading this e-mail and 6 7 from our discussion that Miracle Hill's view about 8 Miss Rogers' and Miss Welch's Unitarian 9 Universalist faith was determinative of the 10 decision that Miracle Hill made with regard to 11 their foster parent application, is that right? 12 I was not part of the discussion and Α. 13 can't testify to that. 14 Okay. Do you have an understanding as 0. to how Miracle Hill would have treated Miss Rogers' 15 16 and Miss Welch's application if they had said that 17 they attended a Protestant church, say a Methodist church? 18 19 MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to 20 the form of the question. 21 BY MS. JANSON: 22 Q. I can rephrase it if that would be 23 helpful. 24 If Miss Rogers and Miss Welch had 25 indicated in their inquiry form that they attended

Page 77 1 a Methodist church, for example, and they said that 2 they agreed with Miracle Hill's doctrinal statement 3 and everything else about their application was the same, would -- is it your understanding that 4 5 Miracle Hill would have accepted their application? 6 MR. COLEMAN: Same objection. 7 I would need to rereview THE WITNESS: 8 the inquiry. 9 BY MS. JANSON: 10 That was -- let's see. Q. Okay. Looking 11 back, that was a document that we marked as Exhibit 12 10 that ends in Bates Number 593. If you want to 13 go back and take a look at that, you can do that 14 now. 15 My understanding is that Miracle Hill Α. 16 would not have accepted the inquiry because they were not living in accordance to the doctrinal 17 18 statement that they agreed with. 19 Q. And what -- what do you mean when you 20 say they weren't living in accordance with the doctrinal statement? 21 22 Α. They indicate that they are a same sex 23 couple. 24 Q. And is it right that Miracle Hill's doctrinal statement states that God's design for 25

marriage is the legal joining of one man and one woman in a lifelong covenant relationship?

- A. We believe God's design for marriage is a legal joining of one man and one woman in a lifelong covenant relationship is the Miracle Hill doctrine statement.
- Q. And so do you have -- so if we look back at Exhibit 13, which is the response letter to Miss Rogers and Miss Welch that we just had in front of us with the Bates Number 592 at the bottom, does that -- does this response letter say anything about Miss Rogers and Miss Welch being a same sex couple?
 - A. It does not.
- Q. Do you have any understanding of why that was not included in the response letter of the reason for why Miss Welch and Miss Rogers' application was rejected?
 - A. I do not.
- Q. Do you know whether there was ever discussion among Miss Betts or others at Miracle Hill about whether to include something in this response letter about Miss Welch and Miss Rogers being a same sex couple?
 - A. I was not part of that conversation.

Page 79 1 But do you know whether there were Q. 2 conversations on that topic, among others? 3 I referred them to legal counsel. Α. You referred who to legal counsel? 4 Ο. 5 Α. Miss Parks when she brought the 6 information to me. 7 I'll go back. At some point Miss Parks Q. 8 came to you with questions about Miss Welch's and 9 Miss Rogers' application? 10 Α. Yes. 11 And what were -- what were those 0. 12 questions that she had? 13 Α. The questions were that she had 14 received an inquiry from a couple who were part of 15 the Unitarian church and a same sex couple. 16 And -- and so what was she looking for 17 guidance on? 18 Α. How to respond to the inquiry. 19 And what did you tell her to do? Q. 20 To contact Sandy Furnell, the Α. 21 communication director, and to have her contact our 22 attorney, Miles Coleman. 23 Do you know whether --0. 24 And Mr. Reid Lehman. Α. Do you know whether Miss Parks actually 25 Q.

Page 80 1 contacted Miss Furnell? 2 I'm assuming from the written 3 communication we have here that she did. But you don't know for sure? 4 Q. 5 Α. I was not with her to witness her 6 contacting Miss Furnell. 7 Do you have any understanding of what Q. 8 Miss Furnell might have told Miss Parks with regard 9 to Miss Rogers' and Miss Welch's application? 10 MR. MATTHEWS: I'll object to the 11 question to the extent that it may be seeking 12 attorney/client privileged information. We haven't 13 established yet whether or not any such 14 conversations included legal counsel, but we 15 know -- do know that they may have. 16 To the extent that the witness knows 17 that those communications occurred outside of the 18 presence of legal counsel, she's free to answer the 19 question; but to the extent that they may have 20 included legal counsel, asserting privilege and 21 directing the client not to respond. 22 MS. JANSON: So Miss -- Miss Furnell is 23 not a lawyer, right? 24 MR. MATTHEWS: Correct. But we don't 25 know if Miss -- if the communication was with

Page 81 1 Miss Furnell or was with Miss Furnell and 2 Mr. Coleman. If the witness has knowledge of conversations that occurred outside of the presence 3 of legal counsel, she's free to answer questions 4 5 about that. 6 But right now, we're in an area where 7 it appears that the conversations may have included 8 Miss Furnell and Mr. Coleman pursuant to the 9 witness' instructions to Miss Parks. 10 BY MS. JANSON: 11 Okay. Well, let's back up a bit. 0. 12 Miss Busha, do you know whether Miss Parks, in 13 fact, contacted Miss Furnell about her questions 14 regarding Miss Rogers' and Miss Welch's 15 application? 16 I did not witness her contacting 17 Miss Furnell, but I believe that she did contact Miss Furnell. 18 19 Q. Okay. 20 Because of the e-mail communication Α. 21 that you presented to me. 22 Q. And do you have any understanding of 23 what was discussed between Miss Parks and 24 Miss Furnell? 25 Α. No. I was not present.

Page 82 Do you know whether Miss Parks Q. contacted Mr. Lehman with her questions regarding Miss Rogers' and Miss Welch's application? I do not know who she contacted. Ο. Okay. All right. Let's shift gears a little bit and turn to a new topic. In -- Miss Busha, in your experience at Miracle Hill, did Miracle Hill provide any religious instruction to the children that live -that resided in its group homes? MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to the form of the question. THE WITNESS: The group homes typically provided devotionals, but children had the ability to opt out of those if they weren't comfortable in attending. BY MS. JANSON: Q. What is a devotional? I do not -- I didn't see the devotions Α. that they provided. Typically a devotion would include a reading of scripture and some type of encouragement. What do you mean by some type of 0. encouragement?

Some type of positive encouragement,

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Page 83 1 something uplifting to help the children feel 2 valuable, worthy, but I don't -- I didn't see the devotional material, so I can't speak to exactly 3 what was shared for the children who wanted to 4 5 attend. 6 Okay. Do you know -- was it -- who was 7 it at Miracle Hill that would have led that devotional time? 8 9 At the Miracle Hill Children's Home, it 10 would primarily be the house parents. In the Boys' 11 Shelter and Homes for Life, it would probably be 12 one of the staff members. 13 Q. Did -- to your knowledge were the 14 children who resided at Miracle Hill Children's 15 Home or the Boys' Shelter or Homes for Life brought 16 to worship services? 17 Α. They could attend worship services. 18 They also had the option to opt out of worship 19 services. 20 And if they chose to attend, what --Ο. 21 what services were those? What church did they go 22 to? 23 I don't know the churches they Α. 24 attended. 25 Q. Okay. Apart from the devotion time

Page 84 1 that we discussed, was there -- and the opportunity 2 to attend worship services, were there other 3 religious instruction that was -- that was provided to or offered to the children in Miracle Hill's 4 5 group homes? 6 I wasn't there, so I'm not sure 7 exactly -- I can't testify that exactly what was --8 what was done. 9 Q. Okay. Do you know whether Miracle Hill 10 required consents from a child's family of origin 11 before encouraging or offering the child the 12 opportunity to participate in religious 13 instruction? 14 I don't know. Α. 15 You don't know whether consent --Ο. 16 whether consent was -- was sought from the family 17 of origin? 18 I do not know with regard to the family 19 of origin. 20 Okay. Did Miracle Hill offer religious 0. 21 instruction to the children in its group homes 22 unless there was a specific objection from the 23 family of origin? 24 Or the child. Α. 25 Ο. Or the child. Okay. And to your

knowledge was Miracle Hill legally obligated to honor the wishes of the family of origin when it comes to religious instruction of children in its group homes?

- A. I know that we honored requests. I don't know the legalities of that.
- Q. Okay. Can you give me an example of a time that you remember when Miracle Hill honored the request of a family of origin with respect to religious instruction?
- A. Yes. At the Miracle Hill's children home, we did have a parent that did not want her child going to -- I'm trying to remember. She did not want her child going to a Christian church. I can't remember where she wanted her child to go. I remember that we accommodated taking the child to wherever her mother wanted her to attend a religious service. I just can't remember what the religious service was. Her staff took her to wherever the mother wanted her to go.
- Q. Okay. Why don't we look at Tab 41.

 This is going to be Exhibit 14. Its Bates numbered Miracle Hill Subpoena 6206. And this is an e-mail thread that begins with a message that Miss Busha forwarded to herself on November 26th of 2019.

Page 86 1 (EXHIBIT 14, E-mail chain dated 2 11/26/19 to Karen Busha from Karen Busha, 3 MIRACLE HILL SUBP 006206 to 006211, was marked for identification.) 4 5 BY MS. JANSON: 6 0. After you've had a chance to take a 7 look at that, just let me know whether -- whether 8 you recognize this e-mail chain. So do you 9 recognize this e-mail chain? 10 Α. Yes. 11 And if you look down at the first 0. 12 e-mail in the chain, you're sending a message on 13 Tuesday, November 26, 2019 to Bradley Holland, 14 Steven Hicks, Kristie Ballentine and Michelle 15 Hamilton. Who is -- who is Bradley Holland? 16 He was the director of the Miracle Hill 17 Children's Home. 18 Q. And who was Steven -- who is Steven 19 Hicks? 20 He was a staff member at the children's Α. 21 home. 22 Q. And how about Kristie Ballentine? 23 Kristie Ballentine was also a staff 24 member at the children's home. 25 Q. All right. And what about Michelle

Hamilton?

- A. And Michelle Hamilton was as well a staff member.
- Q. Okay. Great. And in that e-mail, a few paragraphs down at the second paragraph on the last page of the chain you write: So we are all --so we are all on the same page regarding the children of Catholic faith. We will respect the wishes of the mother conveyed through her attorney and accommodate mass for her children. In addition, based on her preference, they are not, in capitals and underlined, to be taken to a church outside the Catholic faith. The mother has made her wishes clear and to do otherwise puts us at risk due to the contact.

Is that last word in that -- in that paragraph, was that supposed to read contract?

A. Yes.

- Q. Okay. And it sounds like from what you have written there that there was a situation where the mother of a -- of children in Miracle Hill's care objected to their children -- her children being taken to a church other than the Catholic church, is that -- is that a fair interpretation?
 - A. Yes. Yes.

- Q. Is this the same example that you were -- you were remembering before?
 - A. Yes.

- Q. Obviously without disclosing the identities of the people involved here, can you tell me anything more about what you remember regarding this particular situation?
- A. Based on what I wrote, it appears that I was in a meeting with them. And if I understood correctly, that they were taking all children to church regardless of their preferred preference.

 And if my memory serves me correctly, it was a house parent, not these staff members, but a house parent had been taking all the children in the cottage to the same church.
- Q. Okay. Do you -- do you know how it was that the mother of these children discovered that her children were being taken to religious services without her consent?
 - A. The child told the mother on a visit.
 - Q. Okay.
 - A. Is my recollection.
- Q. And in your e-mail that we were just looking at, you write: If I understood correctly yesterday that we make, in quotes, all kids go to

Page 89 1 church regardless of their preference, then we are 2 practicing outside the contract by forcing a child to attend a church outside their faith -- faith 3 preference. In addition, if we have children who 4 5 voice unbelief and do not want to attend church, 6 based on the contract we cannot force them to 7 attend. 8 What is the contract that you're 9 referring to there? 10 The contract with the Department of 11 Social Services. 12 Q. And that's a contract that Miracle Hill 13 enters into with DSS to provide foster care 14 services? 15 MR. MATTHEWS: Object to the form of 16 the question. 17 THE WITNESS: This was -- this was a contract Miracle Hill entered in with DSS to 18 19 provide residential services. 20 BY MS. JANSON: 21 Okay. In that -- in that paragraph 22 that I just read from, you said if I understood 23 correctly yesterday. Do you remember what it was 24 that happened the day before you wrote this e-mail 25 that you're referring to there?

Page 90 It appears I had a meeting with these Α. four staff members. 0. Okay. Is it -- is it your understanding from your time at Miracle Hill that Miracle Hill considers it part of its religious mission to make children attend church? No, it is not -- it was not our practice to make children attend church. Q. But judging from the e-mail we were just looking at -- we were just looking at, it seems like that's what was happening at the Miracle Hill Children's Home, doesn't it? MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to the form of the question. THE WITNESS: My recollection is that there was a house parent -- house parents took the children to church that was requiring all the children in the cottage to go to church. BY MS. JANSON: Was it -- was it Miracle Hill's policy 0. to require the children that lived in its residential homes to go to church absent an objection from their families of origin? MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to

the form of the question.

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Page 91 1 THE WITNESS: Can you repeat the 2 question, please? BY MS. JANSON: 3 4 Q. Sure. Was it Miracle Hill's policy to 5 require the children that lived in its residential 6 homes to go to church unless there was an objection 7 from their family of origin? 8 Α. I don't recall it being in policy. 9 Ο. Was it a practice? 10 It was a practice to offer -- offer Α. 11 children church services on Sunday while they were 12 in residential care, yes. 13 Q. Were they encouraged to attend church 14 services? 15 Α. They were offered the opportunity to 16 attend church services. 17 Q. But you don't know whether they were 18 encouraged to attend the church services? 19 I -- I don't know. Α. 20 And what was it -- what was it 0. 21 specifically about the contract -- Miracle Hill's 22 contract with DSS that you referenced in this 23 e-mail that's Exhibit 14 that led you to make the 24 statement here that if we make all kids go to 25 church regardless of their preference, we are

Page 92 1 practicing outside the contract? 2 MR. MATTHEWS: Object to the form of 3 the question in that it's asking the lay witness for a legal -- legal opinion, but you're free to 4 5 answer the question. 6 MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. I also 7 object to the form and relevance of the question 8 for residential foster care. 9 BY MS. JANSON: 10 I'm just looking for what -- what the Q. 11 basis was for your statement in this e-mail that 12 you wrote where you said that if we make all kids 13 go to church regardless of their preference, we are 14 practicing outside the contract. 15 I would have to see the contract to 16 know what I was referencing. 17 Ο. You don't have any recollection of what 18 it was in the contract that you were referring to 19 there? 20 There is obviously something in the Α. 21 contract regarding religious activities for 22 children, but I don't recall what it is without 23 seeing the contract. 24 Q. Okay. Looking back at that same e-mail 25 that is Exhibit 14, further up in the chain on the

Page 93 1 page that's marked Bates Number 6207. This is an 2 e-mail from Mr. Holland on November 26, 2019. 3 he's writing just to you in response to your e-mail that we had been looking at previously. And about 4 5 I think it's the fourth paragraph down on 6207 --6 MR. MATTHEWS: Kate, we're just --7 MS. JANSON: Sure. 8 I apologize. MR. MATTHEWS: We're 9 looking for this document. 10 BY MS. JANSON: 11 Okay. And then -- so he writes: 0. 12 may limit our staff's ability to worship with this 13 decision. We are breaking with program and as I 14 understand it MHM, Miracle Hill Ministries, 15 practices. 16 Do you have an understanding of what he 17 means when he says we are breaking with program and as I understand it Miracle Hill Ministries 18 19 practices? 20 Can you repeat the question, please? Α. 21 My question was whether you have 22 an understanding of what Mr. Holland meant when he 23 wrote we are breaking with program and as I 24 understand it Miracle Hill Ministries practices.

I don't -- I don't understand why

Α.

Page 94 1 Mr. Holland wrote that or what he believed. 2 Ο. Does it -- does that statement suggest 3 that it had, in fact, been Miracle Hill's practice to insist that the children in its group homes 4 5 attend religious services? 6 MR. MATTHEWS: Object to the form of 7 the question. 8 And, Miss Brusseau, I apologize. 9 not been identifying myself. Miles has been good 10 about identifying himself. So if you have previous 11 objections with no name on it, it's probably me. 12 COURT REPORTER: That's what I thought. 13 Thank you. 14 THE WITNESS: My understanding from my 15 employment was that children had a choice, and that 16 was the practice of Miracle Hill. I cannot speak to Mr. Holland's practice. 17 18 BY MS. JANSON: 19 If you look -- if you look in the next Q. 20 paragraph down, he writes -- in the same e-mail he 21 I have been working with Steve this 22 morning on how we are going to accommodate this 23 request. 24 And is the Steve that he's referring to

there Mr. Hicks?

Page 95 1 Α. Yes. And he was a staff member at the 2 Q. 3 children's home, right? 4 Yes. He supervised the house parents. Α. 5 Ο. And then Mr. Holland writes: If the 6 mother is not okay with this as an option, then I 7 respect her decision. It will be up to DSS to 8 place the children in the best option available. 9 Do you see that there? 10 Α. Yes. 11 Do you -- do you have an understanding 0. 12 of what Mr. Holland meant by that? 13 Α. I can't speak for what he meant. I can 14 only read what he stated. 15 Do you understand him to be suggesting 16 that DSS would need to find another CPA to care for 17 these children if the mother did not want Miracle 18 Hill to take her children to religious services 19 outside the Catholic faith? 20 MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to 21 the form of the question. 22 THE WITNESS: His statement was that it would be up to DSS to place the children in the 23 24 best option available. BY MS. JANSON: 25

- Q. Has -- to your knowledge, had -- did
 Miracle -- had Miracle Hill when it operated its
 group homes ever declined to care for a child in
 one of its group homes because the child's family
 objected to the child attending Miracle Hill's
 religious services?
 - A. I did not have knowledge of that.
- Q. You don't know whether -- you don't know whether that ever happened or you believe that it never happened?
 - A. I don't know if it ever happened.
- Q. Do you -- do you personally, do you agree that that would be the appropriate course for Miracle Hill to take if a family of origin objected to its child's being exposed to Miracle Hill's religious teachings?
- MR. MATTHEWS: Object to the form of the question in reference to that that would be the appropriate course. I'm not sure what that refers to.
- 21 BY MS. JANSON:

Q. I can clarify. If -- if a family of origin objected to a child being -- a child in a Miracle Hill group home being exposed to Miracle Hill's religious teachings, would the appropriate

Page 97 course for Miracle Hill to take be to decline to care for the child and ask for DSS to find another CPA? Α. No. What do you think would be the appropriate course for Miracle Hill to take in that circumstance? Α. To respect and accommodate the wishes of the parent and the child. And in your -- in your reply to Mr. Holland on Exhibit 14, the page marked 6206, that's the first page there, first paragraph, you write at the bottom: We accept children of all faiths into care at Miracle Hill Ministries and this mother's request should not disrupt their placement. We are in no way changing who we are, but rather we are respecting religious differences among our children and their families' preference. So that's con -- that's consistent with what you said about Miracle Hill respecting and accommodating the wishes of the parent and the child, right? Α. Yes. Q. And as you say here in the e-mail, it,

quote, in no way changes who Miracle Hill is to

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respect religious differences among the children in Miracle Hill's care, right?

- A. That's correct. Accommodating other religious beliefs did not change what Miracle Hill was.
- Q. So to your knowledge then, why does

 Miracle Hill refuse to work with prospective foster

 parents who practice a different faith?
- A. I can't speak to Miracle Hill's decisions or how they operate their business.
- Q. Do you have -- do you have an opinion or a personal view as to why Miracle Hill refuses to work with prospective foster parents who practice a different faith?
- A. Miracle Hill is a private religious organization and they want to operate with people of like faith is my understanding, but I can't speak for the minister.
- Q. So what I'm trying to understand is if you're clear in this e-mail that Miracle Hill respects religious differences among the children that are under its care and yet Miracle Hill when it comes to folks that are interested in serving as foster parents, Miracle Hill requires that those people follow the same religious beliefs and the

Page 99 same faith as Miracle Hill, do you have an opinion or an understanding as to why those two things are treated differently? Α. No. MR. MATTHEWS: Object to the form of the question. I'm sorry, this is Steve Matthews again. BY MS. JANSON: Q. And then you write a couple paragraphs down in the e-mail: As for devotions at Miracle Hill Children's Home, nothing changes. Any child who does not want to actively participate can sit quietly during those times. In the rare incident that And then: you have a family contact you and object based on their faith, please let me know so we can staff with Ken to determine the best plan for the child. So this is talking about the devotions that we -- that we spoke about a little bit earlier, right? Α. Yes. Q. And this suggests that children who did not want to actively participate could sit quietly during those times, but it sounds like they still

had to attend the devotional time, is that right?

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- A. These are home -- the facility was a home life setting, so you could sit quietly without sitting in the devotion area.
- Q. Do you know whether Miracle Hill ever had a family object to their child or their children attending these daily devotions?
 - A. I don't recall.
- Q. Okay. We can put -- we can put that one aside for now. Let's mark Tab 42 as Exhibit 15 I think we're on. And this is marked Miracle Hill Subpoena 6220. It's an e-mail from Miss Busha to Mr. Holland dated November 26, 2019.
- (EXHIBIT 15, E-mail dated 11/26/19 to

 14 Bradley Holland from Karen Busha,

 15 MIRACLE_HILL_SUBP_006220, was marked for

 16 identification.)
- 17 BY MS. JANSON:

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- Q. Just let me know if you recognize this document.
- A. Yes.
- Q. And it looks like this was -- this e-mail was sent November 26, 2019, which is the same day as the prior exhibit that we were just discussing, right?
 - A. I'm sorry, what was the question?

- Q. This e-mail that we're looking at, Exhibit 15, is dated November 26, 2019. Is that the same day as the prior exhibit that we were looking at, Exhibit 14, the prior e-mail chain?
 - A. Yes.

- Q. Okay. So you sent a separate e-mail to Mr. Holland on that same day. It appears to be generally related to the same topic that we are now discussing, right?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. And it -- the subject line reads:

 Placement disruption. And you wrote: Miracle Hill

 Ministries' stance on their being placed with us is
 in bold on our -- on our website under foster care.

 The page was designed to emphasize that we do not

 discriminate against children coming into care.

 I'm not sure what MHCH has done in the past, but my
 understanding is that this is our stance at the

 present time. So Catholic children needing
 accommodations for mass would have nothing to do
 with their being placed at MHCH.

Do you see that there?

- A. Yes.
- Q. And in the first line there where it says MHM stance on their being placed with us, is

- this talking about the children whose -- the Catholic children whose mother had objected to their being -- to her children being taken to churches outside the Catholic faith?
- A. Yes, that's what this is referring to.

 Or any other child that would need an accommodation for religious purposes.
- Q. Okay. And you write in the section that I read: I'm not sure what MHCH has done in the -- has done in the past.

Did you ever find out whether at some time before this, before November of 2019, it had been the practice at Miracle Hill Children's Home to discriminate against nonProtestant children residing at the home?

- A. No.
- Q. No, you didn't find out or no, they didn't do that?
 - A. No, I did not find out.
- Q. Okay. Do you know whether Miracle Hill ever tried to -- Miracle Hill Children's Home ever tried to find a different placement for a child because his or her family of origin did not want them to attend Miracle Hill's religious services?
 - A. Can you repeat the question, please?

- Q. Sure. Do you know whether Miracle Hill ever -- Miracle Hill Children's Home, sorry, ever tried to find a different placement for a child because the child's family of origin did not want them to attend Miracle Hill's religious services?
- A. I am not aware of that during my tenure with Miracle Hill.
- Q. Okay. So the next document I want to look at is Tab 43. It's going to be Exhibit 16 and it's Bates marked Miracle Hill Subpoena 6221. And this is going -- this is an e-mail from Miss Busha to Bradley Holland dated November 27th, 2019. The subject line reads re followup and a bit more context for Catholic request.

(EXHIBIT 16, E-mail chain dated 11/27/19 to Bradley Holland from Karen Busha, MIRACLE_HILL_SUBP_006221 to 006222, was marked for identification.)

19 BY MS. JANSON:

- Q. Just let me know if you recognize the e-mails.
 - A. Yes.
- Q. And, let's see. In Mr. Holland's e-mail, 10:45 AM part way down the page there, he writes: We have planned to transport to Catholic

service once per week and for them to remain home during Sunday church.

To your recollection, is that, in fact, how the situation we've been discussing with the Catholic children was resolved?

- A. What's the question again?
- Q. To your -- to your recollection, was this, in fact, how the situation we've been discussing with the Catholic children how it was resolved?
- A. Yes. The children were taken -- the children were to be taken to the Catholic service as requested and to remain home during Sunday church services.
- Q. Okay. Do you remember -- from your time at Miracle Hill, do you remember any other situations in which a child's parent objected to his or her attending church services with -- with Miracle Hill?
- A. I don't recall any other situations other than this one.
- Q. Okay. Do you know whether Miracle Hill has a formal policy regarding religious instruction of children -- or had, I should say, a formal policy regarding religious instruction of children

in its group home?

- A. I believe the instructions were included in the operational manual for the ministry for the children's home.
 - Q. Okay.
- A. But I'm not certain without seeing the manual.
- Q. And then just a couple more questions on this one. Mr. Holland writes a couple sentences down, it looks like two names: Redacted and redacted are the two boys involved in this decision. Both professed faith in Christ while attending church with house parents. Blank asked his mother's permission to be baptized, which is what triggered the response from mother.

The names are redacted there, but it looks like next to each name there's a dash and then a number, dash 9 and dash 8. Do you know whether the 8 and the 9 are the children's ages?

- A. I do not know.
- Q. Okay. And it looks like from this one of the children -- one of the boys asked his mother to be baptized after attending Miracle Hill's religious services, right?

MR. COLEMAN: Object to the form of the

Page 106 1 question. 2 THE WITNESS: They did not attend 3 Miracle Hill religious organization -- services. Miracle Hill's services. 4 5 BY MS. JANSON: 6 0. Okay. What I mean is after 7 attending -- after attending church -- I mean, 8 Mr. Holland says in his e-mail: Both professed 9 faith in Christ while attending church with house 10 parents. 11 So my question -- I'm just confirming 12 what's in the e-mail. One of the children asked 13 his mother to be baptized after he had attended 14 church with Miracle Hill house parents, is that 15 right? 16 The children had been attending 17 church with the house parents. The children had 18 not objected to attending church. 19 Q. Okay. Do you know whether Miracle Hill 20 would encourage the children at its group homes to get baptized? 21 22 I do not know that they would encourage 23 children to get baptized. 24 Q. In your response to Mr. Holland at the 25 top of the page here, you write: If you have a

staff adamant they cannot go with them to mass, please accommodate their request. We do that with licensed foster parents. Staff not comfortable are accommodated.

When you say -- sorry. Do you know whether staff at the -- at the Miracle Hill Children's Home ever refused to take children to different church services that they had -- that their family origin had requested that they be taken to?

- A. I don't recall -- I don't recall if a staff member was uncomfortable going to the mass or if they thought the staff member would be uncomfortable going to mass.
- Q. Okay. And then you also -- you also write there: We do that with licensing foster parents. Staff not comfortable are accommodated.

What did you mean by that?

- A. So if a staff member is not comfortable, then we wouldn't require the staff member to go. We would use another staff member that was comfortable.
- Q. Okay. So that -- so were there -- were there times then after Miracle Hill changed its policy to start working with Catholic prospective

foster parents that staff members expressed discomfort with working with the Catholic applicants?

- A. I wasn't party to those conversations with the foster care staff and their supervisors.
- Q. But you're -- the point that you're making in this e-mail is that to the extent staff were not comfortable working with Catholic prospective foster parents, the preference -- those preferences of the staff would be accommodated, is that right?

MR. COLEMAN: Object to the form of the question. This is Miles.

THE WITNESS: The point of my e-mail is that if a staff member was not comfortable taking a child to mass, we would -- we would not require the staff member to go with the child, but we would still accommodate the child.

BY MS. JANSON:

Q. Right. I understand that. I'm looking at the second -- the second piece of this where you're referring to licensing foster parents. And I'm just trying to understand whether what you're saying here is that Miracle Hill staff who were not Miracle Hill licensing staff who were not

- comfortable working with Catholic prospective foster parents would -- would be accommodated such that somebody else would work with those prospective foster parents, is that right?
- A. We do that with licensing. I'm reading what I wrote and trying to understand what I meant.
 - Q. Sure.

- A. My best guess is that what I meant was if we had a licensing staff that was uncomfortable working with a -- with a Catholic applicant, then we would use a licensing staff that was comfortable.
- Q. Okay. I -- I'm almost -- I just have one -- a couple more questions before we switch topics, so why don't I just finish up this one section and then we can talk about taking another break.
- Did -- with respect to the children in Miracle Hill's group homes when -- when it had them, did Miracle Hill provide mentors for those children?
- A. We did provide mentors for children wanting mentors.
- Q. Okay. And how did Miracle Hill find people to be mentors to the children in its group

Page 110 1 homes? 2 I believe our mentors were referred to 3 us through Fostering Great Ideas to our liaison at Miracle Hill who worked directly with foster -- who 4 5 worked directly with the mentoring process with 6 Fostering Great Ideas. 7 So what is -- what is Fostering Great Q. 8 Ideas? Is that a separate organization? 9 Α. Yes, it is. 10 And is that an organization that 11 recruits people to be mentors for children in 12 foster care? 13 Α. That's one of the things that they do, 14 yes. 15 Would -- so who would be -- who would Q. 16 be responsible for matching up the children in 17 Miracle Hill's group homes who wanted mentors with 18 mentors? 19 Beth Sevilla. Α. 20 And do you know whether -- whether she 0. 21 would or others involved in the process would try 22 to match children with mentors who shared their 23 same faith? 24 Α. I don't know the process that she used 25 to match mentors.

- Q. Do you know whether -- whether the children or their families of origin would ever request the mentor be of a specific faith?
 - A. I don't know.
- Q. One more document I just want to take a look at quickly. This is going to be Exhibit 17, I believe. And, Serena, this is Tab 7. It's Bates numbered Miracle Hill Subpoena 1319. And this is an e-mail thread from -- from Marques Petty to Beth Williams and others dated January 4th, 2018?
- (EXHIBIT 17, E-mail chain dated 1/4/18 to Lisa Yerrick from Marques Petty,
- MIRACLE_HILL_SUBP_001319 to 001323, was marked for identification.)
 - MR. MATTHEWS: I'm sorry, Kate, could you hold just one moment? I'm having trouble locating it. Thank you. Sorry about that. Thank you.
- 19 BY MS. JANSON:

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- Q. Just take a look at that and let me know if -- if you've seen this e-mail before, if you recognize this.
 - A. Not until you sent it to Mr. Matthews.
- Q. Okay. If you look at -- if you look on the page labeled 1320, the bottom of that page is

an e-mail from Beth Williams. And she writes: I sent instruction last week regarding, and the name is redacted, mentoring the child, see below. I am confused that staff are now stating that a pastor is going through the process.

And it appears to me if you look farther down in the e-mail chain that the child that Miss Williams is referring to here was Muslim. Is that -- am I interpreting that correctly as you look at this?

- A. I can't interpret someone else's e-mails.
- Q. Do you have any -- do you have any familiarity or any recollection of the situation that's being discussed in this e-mail chain?
- A. I was not employed at Miracle Hill during this time.
- Q. Okay. This was before you started in August of 2018?
 - A. That's correct.
- Q. Okay. Fair enough. So we've been -we've been discussing Miracle Hill's group homes.
 With respect to the foster families that Miracle
 Hill works with, does Miracle Hill in your
 experience encourage those families to provide

Page 113 1 Evangelical Protestant religious instruction to 2 foster children that are placed with them? 3 I'm not aware of encouraging foster Α. parents to provide religious instruction. 4 5 Okay. Do you know whether -- whether foster families are -- Miracle Hill foster families 6 7 are supposed to respect the wishes of a foster 8 child's family of origin with respect to the 9 child's faith? 10 Α. Yes, they are. 11 Are they -- are the foster families 0. 12 supposed to make sure that the -- that the children can attend services at a -- at a house of worship 13 14 of their faith? 15 Α. Yes. 16 Do you know whether if a foster child's 17 family of origin does not express a particular 18 preference as to faith, can a foster family expose 19 the child to its own religion? 20 If that's part of the family's routine, Α. 21 yes, they can carry the child with them. 22 Q. They can take the child to a church 23 with them, for instance? 24 Α. That's my understanding. 25 0. And does Miracle Hill encourage the

Page 114 1 foster families that it works with to do that? 2 I don't know that Miracle Hill 3 encourages foster families to take children to I don't know if the foster care staff did 4 5 that. 6 MS. JANSON: Okay. So we've been going 7 awhile now. It's about ten after 12:00. I don't 8 know whether it would be a good time to take a slightly longer break for lunch or what your 9 10 preference is, Miss Busha or Steve, as to how we 11 proceed. 12 MR. MATTHEWS: Do you have any idea 13 about how much more you've got to do? 14 MS. JANSON: I would say that just 15 judging from my outline, I'm, you know, well past 16 halfway, maybe two-thirds of the way through, but, 17 you know, I don't know to what extent others will 18 have -- have questions as well. 19 MR. MATTHEWS: Why don't we go ahead 20 and take a break for lunch since it's after 12:00 21 and then we'll just reconvene after lunch. 22 MS. JANSON: Okay. About how long do 23 you guys want to take? 24 MR. MATTHEWS: Do you want to say until 25 1:15? Will that work for you all, 1:15?

Page 115 1 That's fine by me. MS. JANSON: All 2 right. Great. We'll reconvene at 1:15. 3 MR. MATTHEWS: Great. VIDEO TECHNICIAN: The time is 12:10 4 5 PM. We are going off the record. 6 (A luncheon recess transpired.) 7 VIDEO TECHNICIAN: The time is 1:17 PM. 8 We are back on the record. BY MS. JANSON: 9 10 So, Miss Busha, I just have a few Q. 11 follow-ups to some of the topics we were talking 12 about before and then we'll move on to something 13 new. 14 To your knowledge, did Miracle Hill make children's families aware that its group homes 15 16 would take the children to church and invite them 17 to participate in -- in devotions? 18 Α. I'm not aware. 19 You're not aware of whether Miracle Q. 20 Hill informed the parents of the children and its 21 group homes of that? 22 Α. Yes, I'm not aware of whether or not we 23 did that. 24 Q. Okay. Do you know whether DSS was 25 aware that it was a practice in Miracle Hill's

group homes to take children to church and to invite them to participate in daily devotions?

A. I'm not aware.

Q. I would like to mark as an exhibit, see if I can tell, I think we're up to 18, but Serena will tell me if I've got that wrong.

Serena, this is going to be that Tab

51. This is a document that I did not -- I did not send to you in advance. I'm just going to share my screen so you can see it. It's from Miracle Hill's website, so it's likely something that you're familiar with, so let me just -- let me just pop that up for you and you can look at it right on the screen.

MR. MATTHEWS: Kate, are you showing us a live copy of the website or is this a -- if this is a PDF, can you tell us when this was downloaded?

MS. JANSON: Just a second. I just did

something funny with my -- can you guys -- I'm sorry. I've got multiple windows going. Yes. So this is -- this is not a live copy of the website, but it -- it was retrieved on -- at April 23rd of this year. So it's -- it's very recent. Are you all able to see what I have up there?

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes. We can see part of

Page 117 1 it. 2 MS. JANSON: Let me scroll up. How's 3 that? 4 MR. MATTHEWS: It is with the line that 5 begins wrath, parenthesis, Genesis 1:26-27, 6 Psalms 1 something. I can't read it. 7 that's -- that's the bottom line that we can see 8 while we're seeing the top of the page. BY MS. JANSON: 9 I'll -- I'll scroll down slowly just 10 Ο. 11 for the record. So this is -- this is going to be 12 Exhibit 18 and this is a page from Miracle Hill 13 Ministries' website. 14 (EXHIBIT 18, Miracle Hill Ministries 15 Agreement with Doctrinal Statement, was marked for 16 identification.) 17 BY MS. JANSON: 18 Q. And it's titled foster care inquiry 19 And I'll represent that it was accessed on 20 April 23rd of 2021. And I'll scroll down slowly so you can -- so you can see, but this is just the 21 22 inquiry page that you -- that you get when you go 23 to Miracle Hill's website and you're looking to 24 inquire about being a foster parent. 25 So it starts with the agreement with

doctrinal statement and then it has the whole page down below. I'm just going to ask you about what's at the very top. So earlier I think you testified that you were not aware of Miracle Hill encouraging foster parents to provide religious instruction to the foster children in their care. Do you remember that?

A. Yes.

Q. And if you look at this foster care inquiry form that's Exhibit 18, the first sentence there under agreement with doctrinal statement says: As an Evangelical Christian foster care agency, we believe foster parents are in a position of spiritual influence over the children in their homes.

Can you explain to me what you understand that to mean?

- A. I'm not the author of that document and I don't know what Miracle Hill intended when they wrote that document.
- Q. So you don't -- you don't have any understanding from your role as the vice president for children's ministries at Miracle Hill as to what it means that Miracle Hill believes foster parents are in a position of spiritual influence

Page 119 1 over children in their homes? 2 I've heard that term used. It was --3 that was never defined to me. 4 And you don't have any -- any Q. 5 independent understanding or view on what that 6 might mean? 7 Other than exactly what it says, that 8 they would be in a position of spiritual influence in their home with children. 9 10 So doesn't that suggest that foster 11 parents who work with Miracle Hill are encouraged 12 to -- to teach children Miracle Hill's religious 13 beliefs? 14 MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to 15 the form of the question. 16 THE WITNESS: It doesn't say that they 17 encourage it. It says that they are in a position of. 18 19 BY MS. JANSON: 20 Why -- why then would it be important 0. 21 for foster parents to be in a position of spiritual 22 influence over the children in their homes if 23 the -- if the goal was not for them to expose the 24 children to Evangelical Christian religious 25 beliefs?

Page 120 1 I can't speak on behalf of the ministry Α. 2 and their purpose in that. 3 Do you know whether -- whether families 0. of origin are -- are advised when their children 4 5 are going to be placed in a home with foster 6 parents that work with Miracle Hill, that Miracle 7 Hill believes foster parents are in a position of 8 spiritual influence over the children in their 9 homes? 10 Α. I do not know. 11 You don't know if the family's origin 0. 12 are informed of that? 13 Α. Yes, I do not know. 14 Okay. Do you know whether any of 0. 15 Miracle Hill's group homes have had children in 16 their care who identify as LGBTQ? 17 Α. Yes. 18 And have they, in fact, had children in Q. 19 their care who identified as LGBTQ? 20 In the group homes? Α. 21 Ο. Yes. 22 Α. Yes. Yes, we have had children. 23 0. Do you know whether any children who 24 identify as LGBTO have been placed with foster

families that work with Miracle Hill?

- A. I believe so, but I am not certain.
- Q. With respect to the -- to the children who identify as LGBTQ who have been in Miracle Hill's group homes, were you ever informed of any problems or issues or anything with respect to those kids in Miracle Hill's group homes?
 - A. I can't recall a specific incident.
- Q. Do you ever -- do you recall any -- any general issues or general concerns being brought to you with regard to LGBTQ children in Miracle Hill's group homes?
- A. I remember discussions in staff
 meetings about making sure that children were well
 cared for, but I don't recall any specific
 incidents.
- Q. Would those discussions that you recall in the staff meetings, were they -- I'm going to put this away there. There we go. Now we're back to normal.
- Were they specific to LGBTQ children or just more generally about caring for children?
- A. Probably both. But again, I don't -- I can't recall anything specific.
- Q. Okay. Does Miracle Hill have -- have a foster parent handbook?

Page 122 1 Α. They did. 2 Q. They did. And did Miracle Hill revise 3 its foster care parent handbook in 2020? 4 Α. They did. 5 Were you -- were you involved in that 0. 6 process? 7 I was. 8 All right. Let's look at -- let's look 0. 9 at Tab 46. This is -- this is a document Bates --10 it's going to be I guess Exhibit 19, I think. 11 Okay. And this is a document with Bates Number 12 Miracle Hill Subpoena 6020. And it's an e-mail 13 from Miss Busha to Brenda Parks and Sharon Betts 14 and others dated December 3rd of 2020. 15 (EXHIBIT 19, E-mail dated 12/3/20 to 16 Brenda Parks, Sharon Betts, Jacqueline Rector and 17 Jane Pulido from Karen Busha, 18 MIRACLE HILL SUBP 006020 to 006022, was marked for 19 identification.) 20 BY MS. JANSON: 21 Just let me know if you recognize this 22 e-mail. 23 Α. Yes. 24 And it looks like from the attachments Q. listed that one of them was the foster family 25

Page 123 1 handbook revised 2020 as a PDF. 2 MS. JANSON: And, you know, Steve, I would just note that -- that in our production that 3 that attachment was a -- was indicated there was a 4 5 processing error, so it was just -- it was just a 6 single sheet saying that there was a processing 7 error. 8 MR. MATTHEWS: Okay. 9 MS. JANSON: So to the extent you can 10 find us a copy of that --MR. MATTHEWS: 11 Okay. 12 MS. JANSON: -- and send that over, 13 that would be great. 14 MR. MATTHEWS: So this was the 15 attachment to this e-mail? 16 MS. JANSON: Yeah. It's the one that's 17 saved as foster family handbook revised 2020. 18 Yeah. 19 BY MS. JANSON: 20 Okay. So this e-mail then, Miss Busha, Q. 21 you write: Good morning. A big thanks to Beth for 22 completing the revisions in the foster family 23 handbook and designing the foster parent and foster 24 child orientation checklist/signature page. 25 Is that -- Beth, is that Beth Sevilla?

Page 124 1 Α. Yes. 2 And what was her role at Miracle Hill? Q. She was -- I don't recall her exact 3 Α. title, but she provided administrative support to 4 5 the COO, to the HRVP and to myself. She was also 6 responsible for mentors, and I -- I believe she did 7 that under the developmental department. 8 I think you said HRVP. Oh. Oh, you 0. 9 mean human resources vice president? 10 Α. Yes. I'm sorry, yes. 11 Got it. And was she -- was she in 0. 12 charge of revising the foster family handbook? 13 Α. She did the -- she did the computer 14 work to revise it and assisted with the edits, but 15 she was not solely responsible. 16 Who else was involved in the -- in the 17 process of revising the foster family handbook? 18 Α. Well, the foster care leadership team, 19 Brenda Parks, Sharon Betts, Jacqueline Rector and 20 Jane Pulido. 21 And what was your -- what was your 22 involvement in the process? 23 Review and to ensure that the foster Α. 24 parent handbook covered all of the accreditation 25 requirements.

- Q. Now, I don't -- I don't have the -- I don't have the document itself to show you. But to the extent you can recall, can you just describe for me sort of generally what -- what the revisions were that were made to the foster family handbook in 2020?
- A. I remember that we reorganized it so the flow was better. Other than that, I can't remember specific revisions without comparing the documents.
- Q. Do you remember if any of the revisions involved any changes to the application process for potential foster parents?
 - A. I don't recall.
- Q. Okay. Do you remember whether any of the revisions had to do with Miracle Hill's relatively new policy of recruiting and working with -- with Catholic families as foster parents?
- A. I don't recall if that issue was in the hand -- in the handbook.
- Q. Do you recall whether there were any revisions related to Miracle Hill's policies regarding working with same sex couples or LGBTQ individuals?
 - A. I don't remember that being part of the

Page 126 handbook or revisions of the handbook. Ο. Okay. And how long was the revision -how long did the revision process for the handbook take, approximately? I would say we worked on it several months. The foster care staff did revisions initially and it sat dormant for awhile and then we began to work on it extensively right before accreditation. I would say it probably took three months to -- to finish the revisions, but I 11 wouldn't know without actually looking back at my 12 calendar. 13 Ο. Okay. And when you say accreditation, 14 what is the -- what's the organization that -- that would accredit Miracle Hill? 16 It is the Commission on Accreditation 17 of Rehab Facilities. The acronym is CARF, C-A-R-F, and it's located in Tucson, Arizona. So that is -- that's not a government Q.

- body, is it?
- No, it's not. It's a -- I believe a for-profit body.
- Okay. Have you -- have you been 0. involved in your role at Miracle Hill with -- with an organization called PAFCAF?

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Page 127 1 Α. Yes. 2 Q. And what is -- what does PAFCAF stand 3 for? It's the Palmetto Association of 4 Α. 5 Children and Family Services. 6 0. And what does that organization do? 7 It's a private nonprofit organization 8 that offers support to private CPAs and 9 residential -- private residential programs that 10 serve DSS. They provide resources, education, and 11 they -- they also work with a lobbying team. 12 Okay. So are -- are CPAs -- can CPAs Q. 13 join as members of PAFCAF? 14 Α. Yes. 15 Q. Okay. And was Miracle Hill a member of 16 PAFCAF? 17 Α. Yes, we were. 18 Q. Okay. And I think you said that --19 well, does PAFCAF sort of work with or liaise 20 with -- with DSS? 21 Yes, they do. 22 Q. And what types of issues or things would PAFCAF interact with DSS on? 23 24 Α. The primary one while I was at Miracle Hill were the solicitation that DSS was developing 25

Page 128 1 for foster care and the solicitation that was 2 issued for group homes. 3 Okay. All right. Let's look at Tab 0. 49, Serena. This is -- this is an e-mail with the 4 5 Bates -- Bates stamp Miracle Hill Subpoena 2384. It's going to be Exhibit 20, I believe. And it's 6 7 an e-mail thread between Dawn Barton of DSS and 8 Miss Busha dated October 11th of 2019. 9 (EXHIBIT 20, E-mail chain dated 10 10/11/19 to Karen Busha from Dawn Barton, 002384 to 11 002386, was marked for identification.) 12 BY MS. JANSON: 13 Q. Once you've had a chance to look at 14 that, just let me know if you recognize that 15 document. 16 Yes, I recognize this document. Α. 17 Q. Who -- Dawn Barton works at DSS, right? 18 Α. That's correct. 19 And do you know what her -- what her Q. 20 role there is? 21 Just from the e-mail, director of Α. 22 permanency management. 23 Q. Okay. 24 At the time of this e-mail. Α. 25 Q. If you flip to the second page of the

document, at the bottom there it's you are writing to Miss Barton on October 1st of 2019 and you say:

Thank you for sending PAFCAF the proposed licensure for foster care document.

Do you remember what the -- what the proposed licensure for foster care document that you're referring to there was?

- A. I think I was actually referring to the solicitation, but -- for foster care, but not sure.
- Q. Okay. So then below you -- in the next paragraph you write: We at Miracle Hill Ministries would like clarification on F(3), Page 13, as soon as possible. It states, furthermore, the agency must not discriminate with regard to the application or licensure of a foster family on the basis of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or marital -- marital status. Per the document definition, the agency means the SCDSS.

And then you go on to say: Since the budget proviso passed by the legislature requires SCDSS to protect the religious freedoms of agencies, please send us written clarification that this is a requirement that applies to SCDSS as an agency, not a requirement on religious CPAs that

contract with DSS.

So from that it looks to me like there's this -- there was a provision in the licensure for foster care document that you're referring to that required -- it was a -- it was a nondiscrimination provision. Is that correct?

- A. Yes.
- Q. And -- and that provision required the agency not to discriminate with regard to the application or licensure of a foster family on the basis of religion or sexual orientation, is that right?
 - A. That's correct.
- Q. And I think what you're -- what you're indicating in your e-mail there is that based on your -- your reading of that provision in the document, it only applied to DSS and not to private CPAs, is that right?
- A. The document defined the agency as the South Carolina Department of Social Services.
- Q. Okay. And why was it then that you were seeking this clarification from DSS that the nondiscrimination provision was, quote, not a requirement on religious CPAs that contract with DSS?

- A. We were wanting written clarification that they were respecting the budget proviso.
- Q. And what -- what is the -- what is the budget proviso that you're -- that you're referring to there?
- A. That protects the religious freedom of agencies.
- Q. And in your view did that budget proviso respect -- I mean protect Miracle Hill's ability to work only with prospective foster parents who are Christian and agree with Miracle Hill's doctrinal statement?
 - A. That was my understanding, yes.
- Q. Do you know whether that budget proviso ever actually became law?
 - A. No, I don't know.
- Q. Then in the next e-mail in the chain,
 Miss Barton replies to you and she says that she
 would, quote, need to run this question through our
 office of general counsel and will let you know the
 response. Do you see that there?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. And then from the -- from the rest of the e-mail chain, it looks like you -- you followed up with Miss Barton about ten days later and then

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Page 132 1 she responded in the top e-mail that she was still 2 awaiting a response. I'm assuming from legal. 3 Did you ever get a substantive response from Miss Barton on the question that you had posed 4 5 in your e-mail? 6 Α. I did not get anything in writing from 7 Miss Barton. 8 Ο. Did you -- did you speak to her about 9 it orally? 10 I don't recall speaking to her orally Α. 11 about this. 12 Do you know -- do you remember if you 13 got any response on this question from anyone else 14 at DSS? 15 No. Not that I recall. Α. 16 Okay. So let's look at Tab 33. Ο. 17 is going to be Exhibit 21 and it's marked Miracle 18 Hill Subpoena 3515 and it's an e-mail from Tony 19 Catone to Reid Lehman dated October 15th of 2019. 20 (EXHIBIT 21, E-mail chain dated 21 10/15/19 to Reid Lehman from Tony Catone, 22 MIRACLE HILL SUBP 003515 to 003518, was marked for 23 identification.) 24 BY MS. JANSON: 25 Q. Do you recognize this e-mail chain?

- A. I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you.
- Q. Sorry. Do you recognize this e-mail?
- A. I recognize the part of the e-mail that includes me.
 - Q. Okay. If you go to the second page of the document, you can see about halfway there -- halfway down there is Dawn Barton's response to you that we just looked at in the prior exhibit where she says I'm still awaiting a response.
 - A. Yes.

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- Q. And then it looks like you forwarded that exchange to Mr. Lehman and Mr. Kruithof on October 11th and you wrote follow-up with Dawn Barton, see below. Is that right?
 - A. Yes, that's correct.
- Q. Okay. And then it looks like -- it looks like Mr. Lehman forwarded the chain on to Mr. Catone. And Attorney Catone is the general counsel at DSS, is that right?
- A. He was during my tenure at Miracle -- at Miracle Hill.
- Q. Okay. And it looks from here like Mr. Lehman and Mr. Catone made a plan to set up a meeting to discuss what was in this -- the e-mail chain, is that right?

- A. That's what the e-mail says, yes.
- Q. Do you know whether Mr. Catone and Mr. Lehman ever actually had that meeting?
 - A. No, I do not know.
 - Q. Okay. Do you know whether Mr. Catone ever provided clarification with respect to the question that you had raised in your initial e-mail to Dawn Barton?
 - A. I do not know.
- Q. In your experience, does Miracle Hill have sort of regular -- regular access to high-level folks at DSS like Mr. Catone?
- MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to the form of the question.
- THE WITNESS: I don't know what type of access they have.
- 17 BY MS. JANSON:

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- Q. Okay. So -- so let's look at Tab -this is 40.1, Serena, and it will be Exhibit 22.
 This is a -- this is marked Miracle Hill Subpoena
 2462 and it's an e-mail from Paula Fendley to
 Miss Busha from November 20th of 2019.
- I'm just interested in, you know, the first page of this. You can obviously flip through the rest of the document if you'd like, but I'm

Page 135 1 just going to ask you about the second e-mail down 2 on the first page. And just let me know when 3 you're done looking at it if you recognize this e-mail thread. 4 5 Α. Yes. 6 MR. COLEMAN: Can I -- I'm sorry, this 7 is Miles. I just want to make sure that I'm 8 looking at the right document. We're on Exhibit 22? 9 10 MS. JANSON: Yep. 11 MR. COLEMAN: What I'm looking at does 12 not appear to be an e-mail thread. 13 MR. MATTHEWS: Not Tab 22. She just 14 numbered this as Exhibit 22. 15 MR. COLEMAN: Yeah, Exhibit 22, Tab 16 40.1? 17 Um-hum. I have not -- let MS. JANSON: 18 me -- let me see if we've got the right thing there 19 or not. Hold on. I'm just getting into the right 20 folder here on my Exhibit Share. 21 MR. COLEMAN: Sure. 22 MS. JANSON: Oh. Well, that's going to 23 be the next thing we look at, so it's fine that we 24 have that one up there. 25 Serena, do we have the -- do we have

Page 136 1 the e-mail that I think comes before? 2 This is 40.1 and we MS. CANDELARIA: 3 also have the e-mail as just 40. I can put them as the same exhibit if that would be helpful. 4 5 MS. JANSON: It's okay to make them 6 separate. Why don't we just make Tab 40 Exhibit 23 7 and I'll talk about that one, and then we'll go 8 back to this one. 9 MS. CANDELARIA: Okay. Perfect. 10 (EXHIBIT 22, Document entitled PAFCAF 11 Member Comments - October 2019, Section-by-Section Discussion, MIRACLE HILL SUBP 002470 to 002487, was 12 13 marked for identification.) (EXHIBIT 23, E-mail chain dated 14 11/20/19 to Karen Busha from Paula M. Fendley, 15 16 MIRACLE HILL SUBP 002462 to 002469, was marked for 17 identification.) BY MS. JANSON: 18 19 Okay. So Exhibit 23 is going to be up Q. 20 in just a second and that will be the e-mail -- the 21 e-mail thread that I described before, Miracle Hill 22 Subpoena 2462 as the beginning Bates. 23 And, Miss Busha, did you say you 24 recognized this e-mail thread? 25 Α. Yes.

Page 137 1 Okay. And so who is -- who is Paula Q. 2 Fendley? 3 Oh, she was the interim CEO at PAFCAF -- of PAFCAF at that time. 4 5 Okay. And she writes at the bottom of 0. 6 that first page on October 21st of 2019: Here is 7 the revised table of comments to the SCDSS FP 8 Licensing Regulation proposal based upon comments 9 at our meeting today. I added Karen's comment and 10 added language at the end of the document 11 summarizing concerns and observations. 12 Do you see that there? 13 Α. Yes. 14 Is she -- when she says I added Karen's 0. 15 comments, is she referring to you? 16 Α. Yes. 17 And then in the top e-mail there, which Q. is from about a month later on November 20 of 2019, 18 19 she writes in her second sentence: Again, DSS and 20 the ALJ did not consider or incorporate any of the 21 providers' suggestions. 22 Do you see that there? 23 Α. Yes. 24 Okay. And then the document that had Q. 25 popped up on Exhibit Share first that we marked as

Page 138 1 Exhibit 22, that is a chart and it has Miracle Hill 2 Subpoena 2470 as the beginning Bates number and 3 it's titled PAFCAF Member Comments, October 2019. I'm sorry, what was the 4 MR. MATTHEWS: 5 Bates Number on that one? 6 MS. JANSON: Sure. It's 2470. 7 BY MS. JANSON: 8 Do you recognize this document? Q. 9 Α. Yes. 10 Does this appear to be the version of 11 the table of comments that Miss Fendley was 12 referring to in her e-mail? 13 Α. Yes. 14 And it looks to me that the left-hand 15 column of this chart is the language of -- it looks 16 like a proposed regulation by DSS. And then the 17 right-hand column contain various comments on 18 certain provisions of the regulation from PAFCAF 19 Is that -- is that your understanding of members. 20 what this chart depicts? 21 Α. Yes. 22 Q. And then if we flip ahead to the page 23 that's marked 2474 and -- and continues on into 24 2475, there is a paragraph, if you look, it says F,

eligibility standards and then Paragraph 3.

says: The agency must not deny to any individual the opportunity to become a foster parent on the basis of race, color or national origin of the individual or of the child. And it goes on.

And then later at the -- sorry, I should have -- I started reading too early. My apologies. At the very bottom of that section on 2474, Paragraph 3 on the left-hand column, it says: Furthermore, the agency must not discriminate with regard to the application or licensure of a foster family on the basis of age, disability, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status.

And then in the right-hand column there at the top of Page 2475, it says, Number 3: How does this impact faith-based CPAs' right to religious freedom, question mark. Per the document, agency refers to SCDSS.

Do you see that there?

- A. Yes.
- Q. And does that -- this -- this seems to me to be the same -- the same language and the same question that you had raised in the e-mail that we marked as Exhibit 20, which ends with 2384. That was your conversation -- that was your e-mail

Page 140 1 conversation with Dawn Barton? 2 Α. Yes. 3 And it had been regarding a proposed 0. licensure for foster care document? 4 5 Α. Yes. Does this -- does this look like it's 6 0. 7 the -- that this regulation that's being discussed 8 here in Exhibits -- Exhibit 22, is that, in fact, 9 the same document that you were writing to 10 Miss Barton about in Exhibit 20? 11 I just wanted to check the number on my 12 e-mail. Yes. This is the document I was referring 13 to. 14 Okay. And so this is -- these are our 0. 15 proposed revisions to DSS's regulation related to 16 foster parent -- or foster care licensing, right? 17 Α. Yes. 18 And the section that I read on the top 19 of 2475, the right-hand column where it says how 20 does this impact faith-based CPAs' right to 21 religious freedom, per the document agency refers 22 to SCDSS, did that reflect -- that was Miracle 23 Hill's comment that you had raised to Miss Barton, 24 right? 25 Α. Yes.

- Q. Do you recall whether any other PAFCAF members also shared -- shared Miracle Hill's concern that the nondiscrimination requirement would affect a CPA's right to religious freedom?
 - A. I do not recall.
- Q. Do you know whether -- whether anyone at PAFCAF raised that specific concern to DSS on Miracle Hill's behalf?
 - A. I do not know.
- Q. And in Miss Fendley's e-mail that we marked as Exhibit 23 which ends with 2462, again she wrote: DSS and the ALJ did not consider or incorporate any of the providers' suggestions.

What does ALJ refer to, if you know?

- A. Yeah, I don't know.
- Q. Okay. And do you have any -- any understanding as to why DSS did not consider or incorporate any of the PAFCAF providers' suggestions?
 - A. No, I don't -- I do not.
- Q. Okay. All right. We can put those aside. I understand from our discussion before that Miracle Hill is licensed by DSS as a CPA to provide foster care services, is that right?
 - A. That's correct.

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- Q. Does Miracle Hill also have a contract or -- while you were -- while you were there as VP of children's ministries, did Miracle Hill also have a contract to provide foster care services with DSS?
 - A. We only had an emergency contract.
- Q. Okay. And what did it mean that it was an emergency contract?
- A. DSS was not ready to issue the full solicitation and they issued an emergency contract.

 I'm not sure of the reason that they issued the emergency contract.
- Q. Okay. When you said they weren't ready to issue a full solicitation, what is a -- what does a solicitation mean in that context?
- A. It would be the full licensing contract that -- the documents that we just looked at, those are things from the full solicitation.
- Q. And so the solicitation is something that DSS would put out essentially asking for -- for CPAs that wanted to contract with DSS to provide foster care services, is that generally right?
 - A. That's correct. That's correct.
 - Q. And when DSS does put out a

Page 143 1 solicitation just generally and it gets -- it gets 2 CPAs that are -- that are interested in contracting 3 with DSS, do you know what those -- what those contracts typically provide for? 4 5 There had not been a solicitation for 6 contract for foster care. This would have been the 7 first solicitation that DSS had issued for foster 8 care. 9 Ο. Okay. And this was in the 2018 period, 10 is that -- is that right? 11 I don't recall when they started 12 working on the -- I think it was 2019 they were 13 still working on the solicitation for foster care. 14 Our comments were October of 2019, so I'm not sure 15 exactly when DSS started their work on the 16 solicitation. 17 Okay. So prior to -- prior to this, 18 that solicitation, CPAs that worked with DSS to 19 provide foster care services did not have a 20 contract with DSS, is that right? 21 That's correct. Α. 22 Q. Okay. They were licensed by DSS, but 23 they didn't have a specific contractual 24 relationship, right?

Yes, we did not have a contract.

Α.

	Page 144
1	Q. Okay.
2	MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to
3	the form of the question.
4	BY MS. JANSON:
5	Q. Okay. So I want to I want to look
6	at a couple a couple documents on this. If we
7	can look at Tab 11. Serena, this is going to be
8	Exhibit 24.
9	COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry, what tab
10	did you say, Kate?
11	MS. JANSON: I said 11.
12	COURT REPORTER: Thank you.
13	MS. JANSON: It's going to be Exhibit
14	24 and it's Bates numbered Miracle Hill Subpoena
15	8240. It's a document titled Protest Decision
16	dated November 20th of 2018.
17	(EXHIBIT 24, Document entitled Protest
18	Decision, MIRACLE_HILL_SUBP_008240 to 008249, was
19	marked for identification.)
20	BY MS. JANSON:
21	Q. Do you do you recognize this
22	document?
23	A. Yes.
24	Q. Okay. So if you look at the second
25	if you look at the second page of the document

under analysis, it says: MHM, I assume that's Miracle Hill Ministries, raises three issues of protest.

And then in the paragraph numbered 3, it says -- it's summarizing Miracle Hill's issue of protest and it says: We protest the requirement initially found as the third of the child placing agencys' responsibilities. This requirement purports to require bidders to adhere to the requirements provided in the licensing regulations without adding to or taking away from said requirements and purports to require the bidder to suspend any such practice after being notified by SCDSS that said practice allegedly violates this requirement.

Do you see that there?

- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you have an understanding as to what the requirements provided in the licensing regulations that's referred to in that -- in that language I just read, what that refers to?
 - A. So what is your question again?
- Q. I'm just trying to understand what -where it says there in the language I just read, it
 refers to requirements provided in the licensing

regulations. And I'm wondering if you know what requirements in the licensing regulation are being referred to there.

- A. Yeah, I don't recall. This was prepared by our attorney.
- Q. Okay. Do you know whether -- whether the requirements referred to there included the nondiscrimination provision that -- that we were talking about just before this?
 - A. I don't recall.
- Q. Okay. If you look at the last -- at the last page of this document with the Number 8242, the chief -- the DSS chief procurement -- well, I guess it's the chief -- chief procurement officer. He writes that after receipt of Miracle Hill's protest, DSS requested cancellation of the solicitation so that -- so that it may revise and reissue the solicitation at a later date. As a result, the protest of Miracle Hill Ministries is moot.

Do you know whether, in fact, DSS reissued a new solicitation later as that language indicates that it would?

A. The foster care solicitation had not been issued prior to my leaving Miracle Hill. The

Page 147 1 final version of the solicitation had not been 2 issued before I left. 3 Okay. So as of January 2021, the final 0. foster care solicitation still has not -- had not 4 5 been issued? 6 Α. That's correct. 7 Okay. And earlier you mentioned that Q. 8 DSS -- excuse me, that Miracle Hill had an 9 emergency contract with DSS, right? 10 Α. Yes. 11 I just want to take a look at that and 0. 12 ask you a couple quick things about that if we can. 13 So, Serena, this is -- this is Tab 14 It's going to be Exhibit 25 and it's Miracle 15 Hill Subpoena 5953 and it's titled Emergency 16 Contract Between the South Carolina Department of 17 Social Services and Miracle Hill Ministries, Inc. 18 (EXHIBIT 25, Emergency Contract Between 19 The South Carolina Department of Social Services 20 and Miracle Hill Ministries, Inc., 21 MIRACLE HILL SUBP 005953 to 005972, was marked for 22 identification.) 23 BY MS. JANSON: 24 Q. And is this -- is this, in fact, the 25 emergency contract that you referenced earlier in

Page 148 1 your testimony? 2 Α. Yes. 3 And I think you explained that it's 0. called an emergency contract because the official 4 5 solicitation had not yet gone out at the time that 6 this document was -- was entered into, is that 7 right? 8 That -- that is my understanding. Α. 9 Ο. And just so we're -- we're clear on the 10 time period here, if you look at the -- towards the 11 back of the document, the pages labeled 5968 and 12 5969. You'll see the signatures there. And this 13 looks like it was signed by Barbara Derrick from 14 DSS on March 29th of 2019 and signed by you on 15 March 28th of 2019, is that right? 16 That's -- that's correct. 17 Okay. And on the first page -- first Q. 18 page of the document, it says: This contract --19 the second line. It says: This contract is 20 entered into as of January 1st, 2019. 21 Do you know why it was that it was 22 entered -- the contract was entered into as of 23 January 1st of 2019 when it was -- wasn't signed 24 until the end of March of 2019?

I don't know why DSS issued it late.

Α.

- Q. Okay. Do you know if there was -whether this was -- was the first contract that
 Miracle Hill had with DSS to provide foster care
 services?
- A. To my knowledge, this was the first contract.
- Q. Okay. Do you know whether at the time -- as of January 1st, 2019 whether Miracle Hill had a permanent or a standard CPA license from DSS?
- A. I -- I don't remember the date that the permanent license was reissued to Miracle Hill.
- Q. Okay. And just generally, we won't go through the full document, but what -- what type of services was Miracle Hill contracting to provide to DSS under the terms of -- of this emergency contract?
- A. This emergency contract was to -- was with the current licensed group homes who were also CPAs to get children out of group homes and into foster care homes.
- Q. Okay. So this was -- this was intended specifically to cover moving -- or an effort, I should say, to try to transition children who were in residential care facilities into foster family

Page 150 1 placements? 2 Α. That was my understanding. 3 Okay. So it wasn't -- it wasn't a more 0. generally applicable contract that governs all of 4 5 Miracle Hill's foster care services, it was -- it 6 was more -- more focused in that way, is that 7 right? 8 That's what I read in the document. Α. 9 Q. Okay. Do you have any -- any 10 independent recollection of this emergency contract 11 apart from looking at the document now? 12 Α. No. DSS just sent the document. 13 Q. Okay. Do you know what the -- what the 14 end date for this contract with them would have 15 been? 16 The front page says through June 30th, 17 2019. 18 Okay. Great. I see that there, yes. Q. 19 Let's look at Tab -- this is going to be Okay. 20 28.1. It will be Exhibit 26. And it's labeled 21 Miracle Hill Subpoena 5857 (sic) and it's a 22 document titled Change Order Number 1. 23 (EXHIBIT 26, State of South Carolina 24 Change Order #1, MIRACLE HILL SUBP 005882 to 25 005883, was marked for identification.)

Page 151 1 BY MS. JANSON: 2 Q. And it's -- do you recognize -- do you 3 recognize this document? 4 Α. Yes. 5 If you look down in the portion of the 6 document, it has sort of the box around it. 7 Description of change/modification. says: 8 To amend the emergency contract to extend savs: 9 the end date. This change order extends the end 10 date to June 30th, 2020. This is an emergency 11 contract intended to enable South Carolina DSS to 12 immediately utilize CPAs to facilitate the 13 placement of children in foster care and is offered 14 for the limited purpose of enabling SCDSS to fill 15 this need in the interim until the full 16 solicitation is available. 17 So that description there of the 18 purpose of the emergency contract is consistent 19 with what we've been discussing, right? 20 Yes. Α. 21 Do you know whether the emergency 22 contract, the end date of this emergency contract, 23 was ever extended again beyond June 30th, 2020? 24 I don't recall. Α. Okay. Let's just look back real 25 Q.

Page 152 1 quickly at the emergency contract that was Exhibit And if we look at -- here we go. The page 2 3 that's marked 5957, halfway through that page is Section B. It says limit on total reimbursement. 4 5 Α. 857? 6 MR. MATTHEWS: 57. It's the emergency 7 contract. I see. 8 THE WITNESS: Oh. Yeah. 9 BY MS. JANSON: 10 Do you see where that is where it says limit on total reimbursement? 11 12 Α. Yes. 13 Q. And it says -- it says total funds 14 239,075 dollars, correct? 15 Α. Yes, I see that. 16 Okay. And then when we go -- if we go 0. 17 back to the change order, Exhibit 26, under description of change or modification, it looks 18 19 like that -- that total limit on total 20 reimbursement is also a provision that was modified 21 by the change order, right? 22 Α. It was included in the change order, 23 yes. 24 Q. Um-hum. And then the change order, it 25 says total funds, 956,300 dollars, right?

A. Yes.

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- Q. Do you know why -- why it was that the reimbursement limit provided for in Miracle Hill's emergency contract with DSS was increased by more than 700,000 dollars in the -- in the change order?
- A. So the change order is covering one year of reimbursement and I don't believe that the initial emergency solicitation was covering that much time.
- Q. It looks to me from the emergency contract like it was initially -- it was initially enforced for six months, January 1st, 2019 through June 30th of 2019. Do you see that on the first page under Article 1 of the emergency contract?
- A. Yes. I don't know why there would be an increase.
 - Q. Okay.
 - A. In the total funds.
- Q. Do you have any understanding of how the reimbursement limits reflected either in the emergency contract or the change order were calculated?
- A. No.
- Q. Do you know whether those reimbursement limits are -- are based on the number of children

Page 154 1 placed with foster families that are supported by 2 the CPA? 3 Α. No. Do you have any understanding of 4 5 where -- where the reimbursement funds that -- that 6 are referred to in the emergency contract in the 7 change order come from? 8 Α. DSS is all I know. 9 Ο. Okay. Do you know whether -- whether 10 those funds from DSS originate from the federal 11 government? 12 Α. No, I don't know. 13 Q. Do you know whether the terms of the 14 emergency contract -- and again, that's Exhibit 15 25 -- required compliance with federal 16 nondiscrimination statutes, regulations and 17 policies? 18 Α. Can you repeat the question? 19 Sure. Do you know whether the terms of Q. 20 the emergency contract required compliance with 21 federal nondiscrimination statutes, regulations and 22 policies? 23 Α. Yes. 24 Q. Yes, they did require compliance? With the Civil Rights Act, yes. 25 Α.

Q. And if you look at -- if you look on the page marked 563 of the emergency contract, I think this is the language that you're referring to. It says the contractor -- Article 9, covenants and conditions.

Section A: The contractor agrees to comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, including -- I'm summarizing here -- but not limited to, jumping down to Number 2, Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and regulations issued pursuant thereto, 45 CFR Part 80.

Do you see that there?

A. Yes.

Q. And then a little farther below under Paragraph 6, it says: The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and religion in programs and activities receiving or benefitting from federal financial assistance.

Do you see that?

A. Yes.

Q. So when we looked at the -- when we looked at the change order that was -- that's Exhibit 26, were -- were either of the provisions

Page 156 1 that I just read, were those amended by the change 2 order at all? 3 Α. No. 4 Do you know whether Miracle Hill Ο. 5 negotiated the terms of its emergency contract with 6 DSS? 7 No. Α. 8 No, you don't know or no, Miracle Hill Q. 9 didn't negotiate? 10 No, I don't know. I don't -- I don't 11 know what anyone did other than myself. 12 Q. Okay. Did -- and you didn't negotiate 13 the terms of the emergency contract with DSS? 14 Α. No. 15 Q. Okay. All right. So just one last 16 document I want to take a peek at on this topic. 17 If we can look at Tab 19. This will be Exhibit 27. 18 It's Miracle Hill Subpoena 5948 and it's an e-mail 19 from Stephen Taylor to Miss Busha dated March 29th 20 of 2019. 21 (EXHIBIT 27, E-mail chain dated 3/29/19 22 to Karen Busha from Stephen Taylor, 23 MIRACLE HILL SUBP 005948 to 005952, was marked for 24 identification.) 25 BY MS. JANSON:

Q. Do you recognize this e-mail chain?

A. Yes.

Q. If you look at -- it's the page labeled 5950. It looks like it's an e-mail that you're sending to Mr. Taylor at DSS. And you say:
Attached is the signed CPA emergency contract for Miracle Hill Ministries as requested.

And then you write: Please note, our understanding of Article 9, covenants and conditions, Number 6, Page 11, as it pertains to Miracle Hill Ministries is as follows: The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, which prohibits employment, underlined, discrimination on the basis of sex and religion in programs and activities receiving or benefitting from federal financial assistance, but which exempts religious providers from this requirement, see Subchapter C, it lists the specific section.

Is it right that the language there that is underlined is -- is language that -- that you added to the Paragraph Number 6 of Article 9 of the emergency contract when you wrote this e-mail?

- A. What's the question?
- Q. The under -- the language that's underlined in your e-mail where you're writing

about Paragraph 6 from Article 9 of the emergency contract, is that underlined language language that you added that does not exist in the emergency contract as written? And we can go back and look at the emergency contract if that would be helpful.

- A. Yes, because I -- I don't remember.
- Q. Sure. So if you look back at Exhibit 25, the emergency contract, and you go back to Page 5963. You'll see Article 9, covenants and conditions.
 - A. Yes.

- Q. And then under A, Paragraph 6 is the language about the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 that I read earlier.
 - A. Yes.
- Q. And then if you compare -- if you compare that paragraph from the contract to what you've written in your e-mail in Exhibit 27, it looks to me like you've -- you've added some language there and that's indicated by the underlining. Is that your understanding?
 - A. It appears so.
- Q. Okay. Why did you think it was important to include that -- that note in your e-mail to Mr. Taylor when you returned the signed

Page 159 1 emergency contract? 2 MR. MATTHEWS: I'm going to object on 3 the basis of attorney/client privilege to the extent that the addition reflects advice received 4 5 from a lawyer for Miracle Hill or for Miss Busha. 6 I'm going to instruct her not to answer that 7 question. 8 If she had independent reason outside 9 of communications with counsel why she added that, 10 she's free to answer. But to the extent it relates 11 to attorney/client communications, I'll object on 12 the basis of privilege and instruct the witness not 13 to answer. 14 THE WITNESS: I have no response. 15 BY MS. JANSON: 16 Okay. So you don't have any 0. 17 independent understanding of why you put that in 18 your e-mail aside from what you may have discussed 19 with -- with attorneys, is that right? 20 That's correct. Α. 21 Okay. Do you know whether -- whether 22 DSS ever either -- ever responded back to your note 23 here in Exhibit 27? 24 I don't recall. Α. 25 Q. Okay. All right. We can put that

Page 160 1 aside. All right. So we have -- we've been going 2 about another -- about an hour and 15. I'm -- I'm 3 definitely getting closer to -- closish to the end of what I have. Do -- would you like to take a 4 5 break now or would you like to forge on a little 6 bit more? 7 We can forge on a little more. 8 Okay. Great. All right. So if we 0. 9 look at -- if we can look at Tab 31. This was 10 marked Miracle Hill Subpoena 7303 and it's going to 11 be Exhibit 28. And this is -- this is a document 12 that's titled DSS Timeline. 13 (EXHIBIT 28, E-mail chain entitled DSS 14 Timeline, MIRACLE HILL SUBPOENA 007303 to 007307, 15 was marked for identification.) 16 BY MS. JANSON: 17 Q. Do you have that in front of you? 18 Α. Yes. 19 Is this -- is this a document that you Q. 20 recognize? 21 Α. Yes. 22 Q. Had you -- had you seen this prior to 23 your preparation for this deposition? 24 Α. It appears that some of this I was 25 copied on and some of it I was not.

Page 161 1 So this -- this looks to me like it's a Ο. collection of communications and summaries of 2 3 events from September 27th to October 31st of 2019. Does that sound right to you? 4 5 Α. Yes. Do you know who -- and it's called --6 7 it's titled DSS timeline. Do you know who compiled 8 this timeline? 9 It appears that Ken Kruithof. I don't 10 know. 11 You don't know. But it wasn't you? 0. 12 Α. No. 13 Okay. On the first page, the first Q. 14 e-mail there that's copied in from September 27th, is an e-mail from Ken Kruithof to Michael Leach 15 16 cc'q you and Emily Parks. And Mr. Leach, he is the 17 current director of South Carolina DSS, is that 18 right? 19 Α. Yes. 20 Do you know who Emily Parks is? Q. 21 Α. Yes. 22 Q. And who is that? 23 She was his chief of staff while I was 24 at Miracle Hill. 25 Q. Okay. And about -- the third paragraph

Page 162 1 down, Mr. Kruithof writes: We at Miracle Hill 2 would like to invite you and Emily to visit our 3 staff and facilities at your earliest convenience. Do you know why Mr. Kruithof invited 4 5 Mr. Leach and Miss Parks to visit Miracle Hill? 6 It was our understanding that Mr. Leach 7 wanted to see facilities throughout the state and 8 we wanted to invite him to Miracle Hill to welcome 9 him and to show him all of the services that Miracle Hill provides. 10 11 Do you know whether the visit that's 0. 12 being contemplated in this e-mail actually took 13 place? 14 Α. Yes, it took place. 15 Q. And approximately when was that? 16 I believe it was in November of 2019. Α. 17 Q. Did you participate in the -- in the visit? 18 19 I did. Α. 20 And who else -- who else from Miracle 0. 21 Hill participated? Reid -- Reid Lehman was there, Ken 22 Α. 23 Kruithof, Brenda Parks, myself, Emily Parks, 24 Mr. Leach. And I can't recall who else may have 25 been in the meeting. Sharon Betts may have been

Page 163 1 there, but I can't recall. 2 Q. Okay. And do you recall generally what 3 was discussed during Mr. Leach and Miss Parks' visit? 4 5 Α. We shared with him information 6 regarding our statistics for foster care and toured 7 him through some of the adult facilities at Miracle 8 Hill to show him our efforts to keep children out 9 of the DSS system by helping their parents. 10 Okay. All right. If you look down at Q. 11 the next -- the next entry in the document, it's 12 dated October 28th of 2019. And then on the top of 13 the next page, there's a note there, Model Foster 14 Care Licensing hearing in Columbia with DSS. 15 confirmed that agency means DSS, but objected to 16 PAFCAF question on how the additional 17 discrimination indicators would affect faith-based 18 CPAs. 19 Do you see that there? 20 I do. Α. 21 Do you know what -- what it means when 22 it says that there was a Model Foster Care 23 Licensing hearing? 24 Α. I believe it refers to the licensing 25 document that we had been looking at that PAFCAF

Page 164 1 was giving feedback on. 2 Q. Okay. So this is talking about that --3 the same proposed licensing regulation we discussed earlier and then the question -- where you had 4 5 raised the question regarding the nondiscrimination requirement applied, is that right? 6 7 Α. Yes. 8 Object to the form of MR. MATTHEWS: 9 the question. Mischaracterizes prior testimony. 10 And I don't think it suggests mischaracterization 11 was intentional. 12 And, Kate, if you'd like me to tell you 13 what it is outside the presence of the witness, I'm 14 happy to do that. 15 MS. JANSON: Okay. I'm just looking 16 back to see if I can rephrase. 17 MR. MATTHEWS: I think it was just a 18 phrasing issue. 19 BY MS. JANSON: 20 Okay. I'm just trying to establish 0. 21 whether what's being referenced -- to the issue 22 that's being referenced in -- in this document that 23 we marked as Exhibit 28 is generally the same --24

the same issue that we were discussing before with

respect to DSS's revisions to its licensing

Page 165 1 It's -- we're generally talking about regulation. 2 the same subject matter, right? 3 MR. MATTHEWS: Again I'm going to object to the form. May I -- just so I don't --4 5 may I ask the witness to step out in the hall for 6 just a second and let me talk to Kate for a second? 7 I just want to clear something up. If you could 8 step out. 9 THE WITNESS: Yes. 10 MR. MATTHEWS: Thanks. (At which time, the witness exited the 11 12 proceedings.) 13 MR. MATTHEWS: I'm sorry, I don't mean 14 to intrude, but I -- you referred to it as proposed 15 modifications to the licensing regulation. I think 16 the term's modifications to the draft solicitation, not to licensing regulation. I think that was the 17 18 proposed solicitation for the contract. Was that 19 correct or am I misremembering well? 20 MS. JANSON: Well, the -- you know, honestly it's not entirely clear from -- from the 21 22 document, the chart that we had looked at. 23 MR. MATTHEWS: Yeah. 24 MS. JANSON: And I don't remember which 25 exhibit that was at this point.

Page 166 1 It was -- hold on. MR. MATTHEWS: MS. JANSON: Was it 30? 2 40 maybe? 3 Here, I'll find it. One second. 4 MR. COLEMAN: It's 22. 5 MS. JANSON: 22. Yeah. Thank you. 6 Thanks, Miles. Yeah, it -- it wasn't clear to me 7 from --8 MR. MATTHEWS: And it was referred 9 to -- Miss Fendley at some point, I can't put my 10 hands on it, Miss Fendley at some point in an 11 e-mail referred to it as a licensing regulation, 12 but I thought it was that draft solicitation. 13 We're all talking about the same thing. I'm okay 14 with that. I just wanted to make sure that was --15 MS. JANSON: Yeah, it just -- it looks 16 to me from the header on the -- on this chart that 17 was Exhibit 22, that those are -- those provisions 18 are provisions listed from the -- you know, the 19 regulations, right? 20 MR. MATTHEWS: I'm -- I'm good with 21 that. We're all talking about the same thing 22 anyway, but I just wanted to make sure we had 23 that -- there wasn't any confusion. The confusion 24 may have been entirely mine, so... 25 MS. JANSON: No problem.

Page 167 1 MR. MATTHEWS: Thank you for your --2 thank you for your time. Let me get the witness 3 back in the room. 4 MS. JANSON: Sure. 5 (At which time, the witness reentered 6 the proceedings.) 7 BY MS. JANSON: 8 Ο. Okay. So we were just discussing the 9 language on the top of the second page of the DSS 10 timeline, Exhibit 28. And it says there: 11 confirmed that agency means DSS, but objected to 12 PAFCAF question on how the additional 13 discrimination indicators would affect faith-based 14 CPAs. 15 Do you know what -- what it means there 16 that DSS objected to the question? 17 Α. No. 18 Okay. Did you attend this Model Q. 19 Foster Care Licensing hearing with DSS? 20 Α. I don't recall. 21 Okay. And just below, the next 22 sentence there from October 28th of 2019, it's an 23 e-mail from Jacqueline Lowe to you and Mr. Lehman 24 and others and he's asking -- it looks like she's asking whether Miracle Hill had available family to 25

Page 168 1 foster two children from the upstate. Do you see that there in that e-mail? 2 3 Α. Yes. And Miss Lowe worked at DSS, right? 4 Q. 5 Α. Yes. 6 0. In your role as VP of children's 7 ministries at Miracle Hill, were you -- were you 8 personally involved in helping DSS find placements 9 for foster children with Miracle Hill's foster 10 families? 11 Α. No. 12 Do you have an understanding of Q. No. 13 how that process typically worked? 14 Α. Yes. 15 Q. And can you just summarize it briefly 16 for me? 17 DSS makes contact with the child 18 placing agency. I believe there's a screening form 19 that is completed and then our staff begin to look 20 for homes for the child. 21 From the foster families that Miracle 22 Hill works with? 23 That is correct. Α. 24 Q. Okay. And if Miracle Hill has a home 25 that it thinks would be a good fit, is that

Page 169 1 conveyed -- is that then conveyed to DSS? 2 Α. That's correct. Okay. And if it doesn't, the -- again, 3 0. that information is conveyed back to DSS, right? 4 5 Α. Yes. 6 0. And it looks like that was the response 7 that was -- that was provided in this instance, it 8 says notified DSS placement that we did not have a 9 home? 10 Yes. Α. 11 And then below that, the October 29th, 0. 12 2019 entry is an e-mail from Mr. Kruithof to 13 Mr. Leach, Miss Parks and someone by the name of 14 Carol Smoak? Do you know who Carol Smoak is? I believe she was Mr. Leach's 15 Α. 16 assistant. 17 Q. Okay. 18 Α. Administrative assistant. 19 Um-hum. And you're copied on this Q. 20 e-mail along with Mr. Lehman and Miss Parks. 21 Mr. Kruithof starts out by saying we are looking 22 forward to our meeting next week to take place at 23 our offices and he gives the Greenville address. 24 Is Mr. Kruithof there referring to the 25 same -- to the same visit that was being

Page 170 1 contemplated in the first e-mail in this document? 2 Α. Yes. 3 And then in the next entry from October 0. 30th, Mr. Leach -- it looks like Mr. Leach sends an 4 5 e-mail back to Mr. Kruithof in response to his 6 message. And he says -- he says thank you and then 7 he goes on to say that he is anxious about the 8 visit due to the lawsuit based on the decisions 9 Miracle Hill has made. This has put me in a 10 situation I do not like and I'm having difficulty 11 with it. 12 Did you ever speak with -- speak with 13 Mr. Leach during the course of your duties at 14 Miracle Hill? 15 Α. I spoke with him during this meeting. 16 Any other times? 0. 17 Α. And we went to greet him and welcome 18 him to South Carolina I believe it was in June of 19 2019. 20 Okay. Do you have any understanding --0. 21 and I recognize that it doesn't look like you were 22 copied on this e-mail, but do you have any 23 understanding of what -- what lawsuit he's 24 referring to in this message?

No, I don't -- I don't know what he's

Α.

referring to in this message.

- Q. Okay. Do you have any understanding as to why Mr. Leach would have been anxious about the meeting with Miracle Hill?
- A. No, I -- I don't know. I can't speak for Mr. Leach.
- Q. Okay. And then, let's see, if we jump -- if we jump down to the bottom of that -- of that same page, 7305, there's an e-mail from Jacqueline Lowe to you and Miss Parks cc'g Dawn Barton.

And she says: Karen, I would like to arrange a time for us to meet with you and Brenda about placement of children in foster care with families licensed through your agency. Would you offer some available times in November that we can meet.

And then below that, a couple of entries down, it's, in fact, the last entry in this document on Page 7307. On October 31st, Miss Parks writes back to Miss Lowe and she proposes some times that you're available to meet and she says please advise as to the purpose of the meeting so that we can prepare.

Do you remember whether the meeting

Page 172 1 that Jacqueline Lowe asked for ever took place? 2 Α. It did not take place as far as I know. 3 Okay. So do you remember -- do you 0. remember what happened after Miss Parks sent this 4 5 response to Miss Lowe's message? 6 Α. I don't believe we ever received a 7 confirmation of a date from Miss Lowe. 8 Q. Okay. 9 That included me. 10 Okay. And you didn't hear -- you Q. 11 didn't subsequently hear that Miss Parks had had a 12 discussion on this with DSS that you -- that you 13 weren't involved in, is that right? 14 Α. That's correct, I did not hear. 15 Q. Okay. 16 That Miss Parks had sent them. Α. 17 Q. And I know you testified earlier that 18 you don't -- you don't know who -- who would have 19 prepared this timeline, right? 20 I don't -- I don't recognize the Α. 21 timeline. 22 Q. Okay. And do you have any -- any 23 understanding as to why Miracle Hill would have 24 maintained a timeline of events related to DSS 25 during this time period?

Page 173 1 Α. No, I don't know. 2 Q. Okay. You can put that aside. Okay. 3 The last thing -- last document I wanted to look at for now is -- okay. This is 4 5 going to be Tab -- Tab 48, Serena. And this is 6 not -- this is not Bates stamped. This is the 7 subpoena that Plaintiffs served on Miracle Hill for 8 the production of documents and it's dated June 15th of 2020? 9 10 MR. MATTHEWS: Can you put that up on 11 the screen? We don't have a copy in the room, I 12 don't believe. 13 MS. JANSON: Let me -- I can do that. 14 Just one second. 15 MR. MATTHEWS: I may have one. Hold 16 I'm sorry, I don't. on. 17 MS. JANSON: Okay. No problem. Let me 18 just -- let me just get it up here. I'll share my 19 So let me just share this. screen. 20 COURT REPORTER: Kate, will that be 21 Exhibit 28? I didn't hear you say a number. 22 MS. JANSON: I think we're on 29. 23 COURT REPORTER: Okav. 24 MS. JANSON: Serena, does that sound 25 right to you?

Page 174 1 Sorry for the delay. MS. CANDELARIA: 2 29 is right. 3 COURT REPORTER: Thank you. (EXHIBIT 29, Letter dated 6/15/20 to 4 5 Miracle Hill Ministries, Incorporated c/o Richard 6 E. Ingram, Jr. from Nekki Shutt, with attachments, 7 was marked for identification.) 8 BY MS. JANSON: 9 Ο. Okay. So let me just share this. 10 Are you able to see that, Miss Busha? 11 Α. Yes. 12 So this is just the cover letter. I'm 13 going to scroll down through so you can see what 14 we're looking at. This is the subpoena that 15 Plaintiffs served on Miracle Hill Ministries in 16 June of last year. And if I go a little farther 17 down -- my mouse is not cooperating. There we go. 18 So this says Schedule A, Miracle Hill 19 Ministries, and it has some definitions which I'm 20 not going to ask you about. And then we get down 21 to here, it says Requests For Production and it 22 lists a number of document requests. Have you ever 23 seen this document before? 24 I haven't seen this document. Α. 25 seen a request for -- I saw a document that just

Page 175 1 had requests for -- I don't know that it said 2 requests. I don't know if it was an exact copy of 3 this page or not, but it was a -- it was a document that outlined all the things that we needed to 4 5 locate for the lawsuit. 6 Okay. And were you -- were you 7 involved in efforts by Miracle Hill to search for 8 and collect documents related to this lawsuit in 9 response to the subpoena? 10 Α. Yes. 11 And what -- what was your -- what was 0. 12 your involvement? 13 Α. Looking for e-mails both in my -- my 14 records and in the former VP records of Beth 15 Williams that was the former VP. 16 And was she -- was she no longer at 17 Miracle Hill when you were -- when you were 18 performing those searches? 19 Yes, that's correct. Α. 20 Q. Okay. 21 She was not there. Α. 22 Q. So you were looking in -- in your own e-mails and in Miss Williams' e-mails for documents 23 24 that might be responsive to the requests, is that

right?

Page 176 1 Α. Yes. 2 Q. Do you know whether -- do you know whether other members of Miracle Hill were also 3 asked to look in their -- in their e-mails for 4 5 documents? 6 Α. Yes. 7 Do you know generally who -- who was Q. 8 requested to do that? 9 I know Brenda Parks and Sharon 10 Bettis -- Betts. And I believe that our IT 11 director at that time was asked to look. 12 So certain people were asked to look in 13 their own e-mails and then the IT director was also 14 asked to run -- to run some system searches, is 15 that -- is that right? 16 I don't know exactly what he was asked 17 to do. I know he was included in helping us pull the documents that we needed. 18 19 Okay. And so did you, in fact, when Q. 20 you looked in your e-mail and Miss Williams' 21 e-mail, did you locate documents and subsequently 22 provide those to counsel? 23 To be honest, I don't remember what I Α. 24 located.

Do you remember if you, in fact,

Q.

Okay.

Page 177 1 looked in your e-mail for documents that would have 2 been responsive to the subpoena? 3 Α. Yes. Yes, you did do it? 4 Ο. 5 Α. I looked in -- I looked in my 6 documents. 7 Okay. Were you asked to look in your Q. 8 hard copy documents as well as in e-mails? 9 Α. Yes. 10 And did you -- did you do that? Q. 11 Α. Yes. 12 And did you provide anything that you Q. 13 found that might have been responsive to counsel? 14 I rarely have hard documents. Α. I don't 15 think that I had anything in my hard documents. 16 Were you also asked to look in your 17 electronic documents outside your -- outside your e-mail, but other documents you might have had 18 19 stored electronically? 20 Yes. Α. 21 And did you do that? Ο. 22 Α. Yes, I did. 23 And did you provide anything that you 0. 24 found there that might have been responsive to 25 counsel?

- A. If I found something, I would provide it, but I honestly cannot remember from a year ago what I found.
- Q. I know. Understood. To your knowledge, is -- well, is there anything else that you -- that you personally did to help search for or collect documents in response to -- to Plaintiffs' subpoena to Miracle Hill?
 - A. No.

- Q. Are you aware of any others that

 Miracle Hill or anyone else at Miracle Hill took to
 search for or collect documents in response to
 Plaintiffs' subpoena?
- A. I know Brenda Parks, Sharon Betts were asked. I know that Reid and Sandy were looking for documents, but I don't know who else. And the IT director. I don't know who else was asked to help.
- MS. JANSON: Okay. All right. Well, why don't we -- why don't we take a short break now and just give me a minute to look over my notes and then when we come back I hopefully will be finished at least for now or close to finished. I don't want to make any promises.

So why don't we go off the record and we'll come back in -- is ten minutes enough for

Page 179 1 folks or would you rather 15? 2 MR. COLEMAN: 15 might be safer if you 3 think you're getting close. I'm going to organize myself so that it might be not necessary to take 4 5 another break. 6 MS. JANSON: Perfect. All right. So 7 let's say 3:15 we'll come back. 8 VIDEO TECHNICIAN: The time is 2:59 PM. We are going off the record. 9 10 (A recess transpired.) The time is 3:22 PM. 11 VIDEO TECHNICIAN: 12 We are back on the record. 13 MS. JANSON: Miss Busha, thank you very 14 much for taking the time to talk to me today. 15 don't have any further questions at this point. 16 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 17 **EXAMINATION** 18 BY MR. MATTHEWS: 19 All right. I have one question just by Q. 20 way of cleanup, if I might. This is Steve 21 Matthews. 22 There was some discussion earlier, 23 Miss Busha, having to do with the number of 24 licensed families with Miracle Hill. It was 25 unclear to me if the number 200 was the number of

Page 180 1 licensed families at any given point in time or was that the number of new licensed families who would 2 3 come on each year? Which is it? Did you get 200 new licensed families each year or was that the 4 5 aggregate that you had at a given point in time 6 when you were there? 7 No, it was not new families, it was the 8 aggregate for each year. 9 Q. Okay. 10 Α. The average. 11 All right. Q. 12 Α. Yeah. 13 MR. MATTHEWS: I have no other 14 questions. 15 MR. COLEMAN: Before I begin, I just want to check with Terri, the court reporter. 16 17 you still hear me okay? We're using a single 18 microphone in this room. 19 COURT REPORTER: Yes, you're coming 20 through good, Miles. Thanks. 21 Okay. We're just trying MR. COLEMAN: to avoid multiplicity of microphones. 22 23 COURT REPORTER: I appreciate that. 24 **EXAMINATION** 25 BY MR. COLEMAN:

- Q. All right, Karen. Thank you for your time today. I've got a handful of questions for you, but I think -- I think the end is in sight.
 - A. Okay.

Q. There's light at the end of this tunnel of the deposition.

Earlier today, sort of toward the beginning of your testimony, you discussed what is a CPA, what role does CPAs play. I'm going to -- I'm going to flesh that out a little bit and just explore your answer.

Specifically, earlier this morning you said -- or response to that, that the role of the CPA was to place children in foster, close quote. That's what I wrote down in my notes. I may not be exact, but do you remember talking about that early on?

- A. Yes.
- Q. And I really -- I know we -- you sort of lapsed into that as kind of just a colloquialism or a vernacular, but really CPAs don't have the authority to place a child in a foster home, do they?
 - A. That's correct.
 - Q. And who does?

Page 182 1 Α. DSS. 2 Q. Okay. So when you say that -- again, 3 just kind of informal language, that CPAs, CPAs licensing, CPAs don't license foster homes, do 4 5 they? 6 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 7 BY MR. COLEMAN: 8 Ο. You can answer. 9 DSS license -- actually license the 10 The CPA does the gathering of documents, 11 information, that DSS has the final authority to 12 license homes. A CPA cannot independently license 13 a home. 14 And is the same thing true for actually 0. 15 placing the child? 16 Yes, that's the -- the same is true. 17 Q. Only DSS can do that? Α. 18 Only DSS can place the child, only DSS 19 can remove a child. The CPA facilitates the 20 placement. 21 And we talked a little bit about that 22 later in the afternoon. I just want to make sure 23 that I understand. So if -- if DSS has a child in 24 foster care in the upstate needing placement, someone from DSS will reach out to CPAs, is that 25

Page 183 1 right? 2 Α. Yes, that's correct. 3 And then what does the CPA do in 0. 4 response? 5 Α. The CPA then looks for a family that 6 they license that can accommodate DSS's request. 7 The CPA looks for a family that DSS Q. 8 licensed, right? 9 Yes, that's right. 10 If the CPA finds such a family, then Q. 11 what does it -- what does it say back to DSS? 12 Α. It lets DSS know that we have a family 13 that would be willing to take their place. 14 And then it's up to DSS to decide 0. 15 whether and where to place the child? 16 Α. That's correct. 17 MS. JANSON: Object to the form. BY MR. COLEMAN: 18 19 I think you testified earlier today as Q. 20 well that Miracle Hill has a case manager that was 21 assigned to both a foster care family and to the 22 child in their home, is that right? 23 Α. Yes. 24 Is that case manager someone on staff Q. 25 at Miracle Hill?

Page 184 1 Α. Yes. 2 Q. And does the case manager have an ongoing relationship with the foster family? 3 4 Α. Yes. 5 Does the case manager have an ongoing 6 relationship with the foster child while it's in 7 that family's home? 8 Α. Yes. 9 So if for some reason there was a 10 change to that case manager, that would disrupt 11 those relationships, right? 12 Α. Yes. 13 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 14 BY MR. COLEMAN: 15 If for some reason Miracle Hill stopped Q. 16 being a CPA and those case managers could no longer 17 work with those families or children, that would disrupt the case management relationship with the 18 19 child, right? 20 That's correct. Α. 21 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 22 BY MR. COLEMAN: 23 And with the family? 0. 24 Α. Correct. 25 MS. JANSON: Object to form.

Page 185 1 BY MR. COLEMAN: 2 And would that be true even if the Q. 3 foster family for whatever reason moved to a different CPA or they moved to working with DSS, 4 5 that move, either they continued serving as foster 6 parents, that would disrupt that case manager 7 relationship between them and with the child, is 8 that right? 9 Α. That's correct. 10 MS. JANSON: Object to the form. BY MR. COLEMAN: 11 12 Do you remember earlier today, I 13 believe it was this morning, before lunch, we had 14 looked at a document, it was Miracle Hill's 15 doctrinal statement. 16 Α. Yes. 17 Do you remember looking at that? Q. And I 18 think one of the questions you were asked was 19 whether it reflected Evangelical Protestants' 20 beliefs. Do you remember being asked or saying 21 anything about that? 22 Α. I remember being asked. 23 0. Okay. Do you know whether a Roman 24 Catholic foster parent could affirm and adhere to 25 that doctrinal statement?

Page 186 1 I don't know. Α. 2 Q. And I -- I should ask the question more precisely, whether a -- it was unclear. 3 Do you know whether a Roman Catholic 4 5 foster parent or foster family like the one -- at least one that serve Miracle Hill could sign and 6 7 agree to and adhere to Miracle Hill's doctrinal 8 statement? 9 Α. Yes. 10 And you know that's because there is at 11 least one family that's done so? 12 Α. That's correct. 13 Do you know whether the Roman Catholic 14 Diocese of South Carolina has ever looked at the 15 doctrinal statement and said it's consistent with 16 the Roman Catholic Orthodox? 17 Α. I don't know. 18 Okay. I suppose then that if, as you Q. 19 just said, a practicing Roman Catholic could agree 20 to and sign that doctrinal statement, really 21 Miracle Hill's doctrinal statement is broader than 22 just Protestant beliefs, right? 23 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 24 THE WITNESS: Yes. 25 BY MR. COLEMAN:

Page 187 1 It would reflect Christian beliefs, Q. 2 right? 3 Α. Yes. MS. JANSON: Object to form. 4 5 BY MR. COLEMAN: 6 0. After Miracle Hill changed its policy, 7 I think in 2019, whether it's the summer, 8 approximately 2019, and it began with applications 9 from Roman Catholics, Orthodox and a broader group 10 of Christians, do you know whether every applicant, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, were treated in 11 12 view the same by Miracle Hill? 13 Α. That was our direction to the licensing 14 staff. 15 Q. And to the best of your knowledge, that 16 was true, it was done? 17 Yes. To the best of my knowledge it Α. 18 was done. 19 That the Roman Catholic wasn't somehow Q. 20 in any way treated differently than a Protestant 21 Christian? 22 Α. That's correct. 23 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 24 BY MR. COLEMAN: 25 Q. And when you say that's correct, it's

Page 188 1 correct that they were not treated differently? 2 Α. They were not treated differently. 3 That policy change in 2019, that was a 0. sincere change of policy and viewpoint, right? 4 5 Α. That's correct. 6 MS. JANSON: Object to the form. 7 BY MR. COLEMAN: 8 Ο. We also looked earlier today at an 9 e-mail that was sent by Sharon Betts to the 10 Plaintiffs in this lawsuit. It was before the 11 lawsuit had been filed, they weren't Plaintiffs at 12 that time, but to Eden Rogers and Brandy Welch. Do 13 you remember looking at that e-mail? 14 Α. Yes. 15 And we talked about that for a little Ο. 16 while. I'm going to ask you a couple follow-up 17 questions about that. Hold on for a second. 18 One of the questions you were asked 19 while we were looking at that document was whether 20 Miracle Hill would work with a same sex marriage 21 couple. Do you remember that? 22 Α. Yes. 23 Another question you were asked around 24 that same time was whether Miracle Hill would work

with a prospective foster parent who identified as

LGBTQ. Do you remember that?

A. Yes.

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- So I want to -- I want to make sure 0. that I've got clarity on the latter question. If a prospective foster parent either submitted the online inquiry form or came to an interest meeting or called and said that they identify as LGBTQ but that they believe the same doctrinal beliefs memorialized in Miracle Hill's doctrine statement, that the individual believes that marriage and sexual activity is limited to marriage between two individuals of different sexes and that they were committed to only engaging in sexual conduct in that context, only if married to a person of the opposite gender and as a result they were committed not to engaging in behaviors or actions of the same sex, would Miracle Hill be willing to work with that person?
 - MS. JANSON: Object to the form.
- THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 21 BY MR. COLEMAN:
 - Q. So if -- if earlier today you said that Miracle Hill would not work with an LGBTQ person, what did you mean then -- because I feel like you just now gave an answer that was -- that was

Page 190 1 clearer. What did you mean previously when you 2 said that? 3 MS. JANSON: Object to the form. THE WITNESS: If they were not living 4 5 according to the doctrinal statement. BY MR. COLEMAN: 6 7 Is it accurate to say that -- that the Q. 8 distinction Miracle Hill draws is not based on 9 someone's identity or orientation, but instead is 10 based on their behaviors and actions? 11 Α. Yes. 12 MS. JANSON: Object to the form. 13 BY MR. COLEMAN: 14 And relatedly, Miracle Hill would draw 0. 15 a distinction based on a person's beliefs in terms 16 of religion or doctrine? 17 Α. Yes. 18 MS. JANSON: Object to the form. 19 BY MR. COLEMAN: 20 When we looked at that e-mail from 0. 21 Sharon Betts to Eden Rogers and Brandy Welch, I 22 think it was marked as Exhibit 13, the e-mail 23 referred Miss Rogers and Miss Welch to other 24 providers based on the fact that they were members 25 at a nonChristian church, is that right?

A. Yes.

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- Q. You said that you were not yourself familiar with the distinctions, if any, between Unitarian Universalists' beliefs in doctrine and Christians' belief in doctrine, are you?
 - A. That's correct.
- Q. Was there also a requirement of Miracle
 Hill that not only must the applicant check the box
 agreeing with or affirming the statement made, but
 that the applicant also in addition had to be
 active in a Christian church?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. And so if Miss Rogers and Miss Welch were members at a Unitarian church, then they wouldn't have satisfied that criteria, would they?
 - A. That's correct.

MS. JANSON: Object to the form.

BY MR. COLEMAN:

Q. If Miss Rogers and Miss Welch in their own depositions that a Unitarian Universalist's belief is different from Christian beliefs and that their personal beliefs are different from Christian beliefs, you would have no reason to dispute that, would you?

MS. JANSON: Object to form.

Page 192 1 THE WITNESS: I'm sorry, what's the 2 question? BY MR. COLEMAN: 3 4 I'll try to ask it better. Q. 5 If -- when Miss Rogers and Miss Welch 6 had their own depositions, if they admitted that 7 Unitarian Universalists' beliefs are different from 8 Christian beliefs, you would have no reason to 9 disagree with them about that, would you? 10 Α. That's correct. 11 MS. JANSON: Object to the form. 12 BY MR. COLEMAN: 13 Q. And if they testified that their own 14 beliefs, individual, are different than Christian 15 rules, you would have no reason to dispute that, 16 would you? 17 Α. That's correct. 18 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 19 BY MR. COLEMAN: 20 When Brenda Parks received the online 0. 21 preform from Miss Rogers and Miss Welch, she either 22 forwarded it to you or at least told you about it, 23 is that correct? 24 She told me about it. Α. 25 Q. And that's because you had -- you had

Page 193 1 asked to be informed of applications like that? 2 MS. JANSON: Object to the form. 3 Yes. We were -- we were THE WITNESS: asked to be aware of applications that may be 4 5 coming from the universal -- from the Unitarian 6 church. 7 BY MR. COLEMAN: 8 And when Brenda informed you, you Q. 9 instructed her to contact Sandy Furnell, Reid 10 Lehman and legal counsel, is that right? 11 Α. Yes. That's correct. 12 Is that because you form a lookout Q. 13 because Miracle Hill was aware that you and other 14 groups like that were actively looking for 15 Plaintiffs to apply to Miracle Hill in hopes of 16 generating a lawsuit? 17 Α. Yes. 18 MS. JANSON: Object to the form. 19 BY MR. COLEMAN: 20 Is it also because you were aware that Q. 21 the Unitarian Universalists church in Greenville 22 had hosted an interest meeting for people 23 interested in applying to Miracle Hill in hopes of 24 being referred elsewhere? 25 Α. Yes.

Page 194 1 MS. JANSON: Object to the form. 2 BY MR. COLEMAN: 3 0. We talked a little bit earlier today about Miracle Hill's practices and its policies and 4 5 manuals relating to religious exercise and activities that -- that children in foster care 6 7 could, if they wished, participate in. 8 remember talking about that? 9 Α. Yes. 10 A good bit of what we talked about 11 earlier today -- when I say we, what you talked 12 about, I was just listening at that point, had to 13 do with Miracle Hill's residential foster care, 14 right? 15 Α. Yes. 16 Is residential foster care or sometimes Ο. 17 called group homes or group foster care, is that 18 right? 19 That's correct. Α. 20 And is that different from foster care 0. 21 that Miracle Hill does as a CPA? 22 Α. Very different, yes. 23 Are there different licenses to operate 0. 24 residential care versus a CPA foster care? 25 Α. Yes.

- Q. Does Miracle Hill internally -- let me clarify because Miracle Hill doesn't offer residential care any longer, right?
 - A. That's correct.
- Q. At the time, let's say from 2017 through approximately 2020, did Miracle Hill internally have different sets of documents that relate to residential foster care versus CPA foster care?
- 10 A. Yes.

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- MS. JANSON: Object to form.
- 12 BY MR. COLEMAN:
 - Q. To your knowledge, in 2017 and 2018 when DSS contacted Miracle Hill with questions about Miracle Hill's practice of working with like faith foster parents, did that issue and the communications with DSS have to do with the CPA foster care side of the ministry?
 - A. That was my understanding, yes.
- MS. JANSON: Object to the form.
- 21 BY MR. COLEMAN:
- Q. And were those issues and
 communications completely unrelated to Miracle
 Hill's residential group home license?
- 25 A. Yes.

Page 196 1 MS. JANSON: Object to the form. 2 BY MR. COLEMAN: 3 To the best of your knowledge, when 0. South Carolina DSS granted Miracle Hill a temporary 4 5 or provisional six-month license, that had only to 6 do with Miracle Hill's CPA operation, correct? 7 Correct. 8 And conversely, it did not have Q. anything to do with residential or group? 9 10 Α. That's correct. 11 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 12 BY MR. COLEMAN: 13 Q. When Governor McMaster issued his executive order relating to faith-based CPAs, that 14 15 had only to do with CPAs, right? 16 Α. Correct. 17 MS. JANSON: Object to form. BY MR. COLEMAN: 18 19 It had no impact or effect or relation Q. 20 to residential foster care? 21 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 22 BY MR. COLEMAN: 23 Is that right? Q. 24 Α. That's correct. 25 And when the United States Health and Q.

Page 197 1 Admin Services, HHS, issued a waiver to South 2 Carolina, that had only to do with CPA operations, 3 right? 4 Α. Correct. 5 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 6 BY MR. COLEMAN: 7 And not residential foster care? Q. 8 Α. Correct. 9 When a foster child is placed into a 10 foster home that worked with Miracle Hill as a CPA, 11 that foster child is never -- well, coerced to 12 engage in religious conduct or activity? 13 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 14 THE WITNESS: That's correct. 15 BY MR. COLEMAN: 16 Correct that they are not? 0. 17 They are not. To the best of my Α. 18 knowledge they are not. 19 And that's a good point. Q. Miracle 20 Hill's policy and instruction is that they should 21 not? 22 Α. That's correct. 23 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 24 BY MR. COLEMAN: 25 Q. You obviously can't be present always

Page 198 1 in all the homes. 2 Α. That's right. 3 But to the best of your knowledge. Miracle Hill's policy and instruction and practice 4 5 that children in foster care in a foster home that works with Miracle Hill and its CPA, as such 6 7 children are not in any way penalized for declining 8 to participate in religious activity? 9 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 10 THE WITNESS: Correct, they are not 11 penalized for not participating. 12 BY MR. COLEMAN: 13 Q. And they're not rewarded for 14 participating? 15 Α. That's correct. 16 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 17 BY MR. COLEMAN: 18 Q. They're not given any better treatment 19 or worse treatment depending on whether they do or 20 don't participate or respond? 21 That's correct. Α. MS. JANSON: Object to form. 22 23 BY MR. COLEMAN: 24 Q. And if at any time a child in foster 25 care or that child's biological parents or family

of origin request that the child not be exposed to or engage in religious activity, conduct or instruction, Miracle Hill's instruction to those families is to honor the wishes of the child and the biological family, is that right?

A. That's correct.

MS. JANSON: Object to form. I'm not trying to talk over you, Miss Busha, but I -- I do need time to get my objections on the record, so maybe you could kind of just pause briefly after Mr. Coleman's question.

THE WITNESS: Okay.

BY MR. COLEMAN:

- Q. We looked at one or more documents earlier today that involved specific examples of children in foster care in either Miracle Hill's residential home or in a -- in a family, whether they were with Miracle Hill, I don't remember, where the child or the parents had a specific request or instruction regarding the child's religious practice. Do you remember that?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. In every instance like that, whether you looked at today or any others that you're aware of, did Miracle Hill always honor those requests or

Page 200 1 instructions? 2 Α. To the best of my knowledge, yes. 3 Did Miracle Hill always make sure Ο. through whatever internal accommodation or 4 5 arrangement was necessary that the child was able 6 to attend the house of worship that they or their 7 biological family requested? 8 Α. Yes. We also looked at a document earlier 9 10 today where it referred to Miracle Hill's view that 11 foster parent rights or people in a position of, 12 quote, spiritual influence. Do you remember 13 looking at that? 14 Α. Yes. Yes. 15 And I think you told us you -- you were Q. 16 not aware of that phrase had ever been defined in 17 writing anywhere, is that right? 18 Α. That's correct. 19 Can spiritual influence mean more than Q. 20 preaching at somebody? 21 Α. Yes. 22 Q. Can it mean modeling love? 23 Α. Yes. 24 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 25 COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry, Miles. You

Page 201 1 said modeling what? 2 MR. COLEMAN: Love. 3 MS. JANSON: Object to the form. 4 BY MR. COLEMAN: 5 Could it mean offering hope? 0. 6 Α. Yes. 7 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 8 BY MR. COLEMAN: 9 Q. Could it mean demonstrating humility? 10 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 11 THE WITNESS: Yes. 12 BY MR. COLEMAN: 13 Q. Can spiritual influence mean a lot more 14 than just proselytizing or evangelizing somebody? 15 Α. Yes. 16 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 17 BY MR. COLEMAN: 18 Q. So it is possible, right, for a foster 19 parent to be a person of spiritual influence and 20 never once try to convert a child, right? 21 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 22 BY MR. COLEMAN: 23 It could likewise be possible --0. 24 COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry. Miles, I'm 25 sorry. I'm sorry, Miles. I didn't get her answer

Page 202 1 over Kate's objection to the last question. 2 BY MR. COLEMAN: Do you remember what your answer was? 3 0. 4 Α. I don't remember the question. 5 I'll ask the question again. 0. 6 possible, right, that a foster parent can be a 7 person of spiritual influence without ever once 8 trying to evangelize to convert a child, right? 9 MS. JANSON: Same objection. 10 THE WITNESS: That's correct. BY MR. COLEMAN: 11 12 We looked earlier today at some Q. 13 documents from 2019 that had to do with a contract 14 solicitation that SCDSS sent out to a variety of 15 CPAs and residential group homes, is that right? 16 Α. Yes. 17 Q. And that was a poorly worded question. 18 Let me back it up. 19 Do you remember looking at contract 20 solicitation documents and communications from 21 around 2019? 22 Α. Yes. 23 Do you recall whether they had to do 0. 24 with either residential care or CPA or both? 25 Α. Both.

Page 203 1 Q. Okay. One of those was an emergency 2 contract, right? 3 Α. Yes. 4 And I think you testified that that was 5 the first contract Miracle Hill had ever had with 6 SCDSS, is that right? 7 Object to form. MS. JANSON: 8 THE WITNESS: No. The first contract with CPA. 9 10 BY MR. COLEMAN: 11 Ο. Sorry. I may have asked the question 12 poorly. 13 Α. Okay. 14 Explain your answer and I'll try again. 0. 15 So Miracle Hill had contracts with DSS Α. 16 for residential care. We could not have a contract 17 to be a CPA. We only had a license. 18 Q. Thank you. I don't mean to ask you to 19 pretend to be a lawyer. 20 Α. Okay. 21 Prior to this emergency contract, were 22 there ever a unwritten -- unwritten contract or 23 agreement or practice between SCDSS and Miracle 24 Hill for CPA services? 25 MS. JANSON: Object to the form.

Page 204 1 THE WITNESS: There was a -- an 2 agreement with regard to an administrative fee that DSS would pay Miracle Hill ten dollars per child 3 per day. 4 5 BY MR. COLEMAN: 6 0. Was that for case management --7 Α. Yes. 8 -- services? Q. 9 Α. Yes. 10 And that predated the emergency Q. 11 contract? 12 That's right. Α. 13 Q. And you're not -- you don't think of 14 that -- the ten dollar per child per day, you don't 15 think of that as a contract because it was never in 16 a formal written document signed and countersigned? 17 MS. JANSON: Object to form. 18 THE WITNESS: That's correct. 19 MR. COLEMAN: Give me just a moment. Ι 20 think those are all the questions I have for right 21 now. 22 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 23 Nothing further from me. MS. JANSON: 24 Thank you again, Miss Busha, for your time. 25 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

Page 205 1 MS. NEWMAN: And this is Christie 2 Newman on behalf of the federal defendants. No 3 questions. Thank you for your time. 4 THE WITNESS: You're welcome. 5 VIDEO TECHNICIAN: Okay. We are off the record at 3:55 PM. This concludes today's 6 7 testimony given by Freddie Karen Busha. number of media units used was four and will be 8 9 retained by Veritext. 10 (WHEREUPON, the proceedings concluded 11 at 3:55 PM.) 12 (The witness, after having been advised 13 of her right to read and sign this transcript, does 14 not waive that right.) 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, Terri L. Brusseau, Notary Public for the State of South Carolina at Large, do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript is a true, accurate, and complete record.

I further certify that I am neither related to nor counsel for any party to the cause pending or interested in the events thereof.

Witness my hand, I have hereunto affixed my official seal this 24th day of June, 2021 at Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina.



Terri L. Brusseau

My Commission expires

April 5, 2026.

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3		DATE OF DEPOSITION: 6/21/2021								
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[zelkind - zoom] Page 42

Z **zelkind** 2:15 6:24 6:24 **zoom** 1:21,25 2:8 2:9,14,15 3:8,16 4:2,4 6:6 9:12

Federal Rules of Civil Procedure Rule 30

- (e) Review By the Witness; Changes.
- (1) Review; Statement of Changes. On request by the deponent or a party before the deposition is completed, the deponent must be allowed 30 days after being notified by the officer that the transcript or recording is available in which:
- (A) to review the transcript or recording; and
- (B) if there are changes in form or substance, to sign a statement listing the changes and the reasons for making them.
- (2) Changes Indicated in the Officer's Certificate. The officer must note in the certificate prescribed by Rule 30(f)(1) whether a review was requested and, if so, must attach any changes the deponent makes during the 30-day period.

DISCLAIMER: THE FOREGOING FEDERAL PROCEDURE RULES

ARE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY.

THE ABOVE RULES ARE CURRENT AS OF APRIL 1,

2019. PLEASE REFER TO THE APPLICABLE FEDERAL RULES

OF CIVIL PROCEDURE FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION.

VERITEXT LEGAL SOLUTIONS COMPANY CERTIFICATE AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Veritext Legal Solutions represents that the foregoing transcript is a true, correct and complete transcript of the colloquies, questions and answers as submitted by the court reporter. Veritext Legal Solutions further represents that the attached exhibits, if any, are true, correct and complete documents as submitted by the court reporter and/or attorneys in relation to this deposition and that the documents were processed in accordance with our litigation support and production standards.

Veritext Legal Solutions is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of client and witness information, in accordance with the regulations promulgated under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), as amended with respect to protected health information and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, as amended, with respect to Personally Identifiable Information (PII). Physical transcripts and exhibits are managed under strict facility and personnel access controls. Electronic files of documents are stored in encrypted form and are transmitted in an encrypted fashion to authenticated parties who are permitted to access the material. Our data is hosted in a Tier 4 SSAE 16 certified facility.

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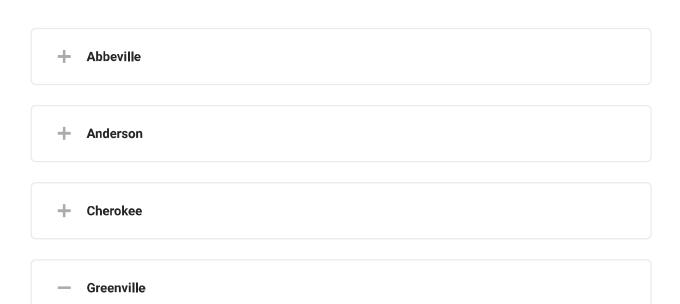
6:19-cv-01567-JD Date Filed 11/17/22 Entry Number 243-35 Page 1 of 4

EXHIBIT 34

DSS Licensing Partners - Upstate SC - Heartfelt Calling - SC Foster Parents



DSS Licensing Partners for the Upstate of SC



FOSTER HOME LICENSING AGENCY SELECTION

Select the agency you would like to use for taking you through the licensing process.

Oasis of Hope is a Christian-based agency, but works with any individual or family who has a desire to make a difference in a child's life. There is no requirement for additional training beyond the 14 hours of pre-service training, unless specific needs of the child warrant additional instruction.

Thornwell began licensing foster families in 2017 and serves all types of families.

Epworth serves married couples and singles who want to foster. The agency serves families from any faith background and training is not faith-based.

SC YAP works with any individual or family who has a desire to serve children.



Call Us: -888-828-3555





Growing Homes SE works with any individual or family who has a desire to serve children.

Connie Maxwell serves married couples and single parents who want to foster.

Miracle Hill serves Christian foster parents and requires families to complete a statement of faith.

SC Church of God Home for Children serves Christian individuals and families of any denomination who want to foster and meet the basic requirements to do so in addition to signing a statement of faith and morality statement.

Nightlight Foster Care Program serves married couples that have been together at least two years and singles over the age of 25 who want to foster. The agency serves families from any faith background and training is not faith-based.

New Foundations' CONNECTIONS Foster Care Program works with all individuals and families who have a desire to care for the needs of children. We are here to serve those willing to make a difference in a child's life.

+ Greenwood	
+ Oconee	
+ Laurens	
+ Newberry	
+ Pickens	
+ Spartanburg	

6/3/2021

∷ DSS Licensing Partners

Privacy - Terms

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EXHIBIT 35

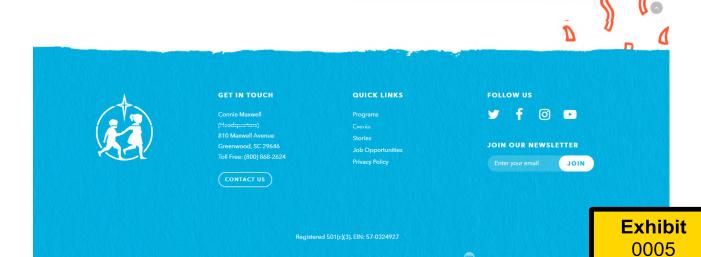












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EXHIBIT 36

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Page 1
1
               UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
                DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
2
                    GREENVILLE DIVISION
3
    EDEN ROGERS AND BRANDY WELCH,
                Plaintiffs,
4
                    C.A. No. 6:19-cv-01567-JD
           vs.
5
    UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
    HUMAN SERVICES; XAVIER BECCERA, IN HIS
6
    OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS SECRETARY OF THE
7
    UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
    HUMAN SERVICES; ADMINISTRATION FOR
8
    CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: JOOYEUN CHANG, IN
    HER OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS THE SENIOR
9
    OFFICIAL PREFORMING THE DUTIES OF THE
    ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE
10
    ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND
    FAMILIES; JOOYEUN CHANG, IN HER OFFICIAL
11
    CAPACITY AS PRINCIPAL
    DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE
12
    ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND
    FAMILIES; HENRY MCMASTER, IN HIS
    OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS GOVERNOR OF THE
13
    STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA; AND MICHAEL
14
    LEACH, IN HIS OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS STATE
    DIRECTOR OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA
15
    DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES,
                Defendants.
16
17
18
    VTC 30(b)(6)
                      SC DSS, Through its agent:
    DEPOSITION OF:
19
                      DIANA TESTER
20
   DATE:
                      December 16, 2021
21
    TIME:
                      9:32 a.m.
22
                      Zoom-Columbia, SC
   LOCATION:
23
    TAKEN BY:
                      Counsel for the Plaintiffs
    REPORTED BY: Roxanne Easterwood, RPR
24
25
                     Roosevelt Hamilton
    VIDEOGRAPHER:
```

	Page 2
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	Page 3
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	OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS GOVERNOR OF THE
2	STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA; and MICHAEL
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11	(INDEX AT REAR OF TRANSCRIPT)
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Page 35 1 It -- you know, it bounces. Α. 2 sorry, my eye. It looks like it went up from 2017 to '18 to 2018, 2019, and then it looks 3 like -- I'm having trouble seeing the last column. 4 5 It looks like it did increase, yes. And do these numbers include the 6 7 number of families interested in kinship care? 8 Yes, they would be kin homes inside Α. 9 those numbers. 10 And -- and could you just briefly Q. 11 explain kinship care? 12 Α. Kinship care is a -- it is a relative 13 or fictive kin who steps forward and says that 14 they are able to -- to take care of the child, and 15 they do have to be licensed -- in this report, 16 these are licensed homes -- so that the child is 17 in a safe setting, but with -- with family instead 18 of somebody that they are not familiar with. 19 Is it possible that these numbers Q. 20 increased due to DSS's increased focus on kinship 21 care during the same period, so that 2017 to 2018 22 period? 23 MR. COLEMAN: Object to the form of the 24 question.

You can answer.

25

Page 36 1 You know, kin homes have THE WITNESS: 2 increased. We, at DSS, believe that's a good 3 thing, because children are being placed with family. 4 5 BY MS. MADGAVKAR: 6 So -- so that might be responsible for 7 the uptick in numbers we see here? 8 Α. It could be. 9 Ο. Are you aware of any of the factors 10 that -- that led to this increase in the number of 11 foster homes? 12 Α. I do know that the program area has 13 been actively recruiting. There's been these town 14 hall meetings with foster home associations to try 15 to increase foster homes. We, of course, want an 16 increase in family-like settings, but specifically 17 kin. 18 And are you familiar with the Q. 19 executive order Governor McMaster passed in 2018 20 related to faith-based CPAs? 21 I would not have recalled specifically 22 on that order. I may be aware of it, but I -- I 23 don't know which order you're referring to, to be 24 honest. 25 So it's -- it's the order that -- that Q.

Page 37 1 directs DSS not to deny licensure to faith-based 2 CPAs solely on account of their religious identity 3 or religious belief. Does that -- does that sound 4 familiar? 5 Α. I -- I think -- I -- I don't know. 6 I -- I'm sure that I've heard of it. I -- you 7 know, I -- quite honestly, I don't keep track of 8 orders like that. I -- I just don't. I'm sorry. 9 Q. Is there any way to know 10 whether -- whether the granting of that order or 11 of the waiver had any impact on the number of 12 foster homes? 13 MR. COLEMAN: Object to the form of the 14 question. 15 But you can answer. 16 THE WITNESS: No. I mean, there would 17 have to be, like, a huge research, 18 statistical-type study to see if there's an 19 association, and -- and, really, I -- I don't even 20 know how they would control all of the variables. 21 BY MS. MADGAVKAR: 22 Q. Right. The DSS didn't look 23 into -- into whether the -- the waiver or the 24 executive order affected the number of foster 25 homes, right? We talked about that earlier.

Page 38 1 Α. Not that I'm aware of, no. 2 Q. So I'm about to -- to move into a 3 different topic. I don't know if -- if now is a good time for a break for you, Ms. Tester, or --4 5 It would be a lovely break -- time for 6 a break. Thank you. 7 Okay. All right. No problem. Q. So 8 is -- is ten minutes okay? 9 Α. Yeah, ten, is good. 10 VIDEOGRAPHER: All right. The time on 11 the monitor is 10:19 a.m. We're going off the 12 record. 13 (A recess was taken.) 14 Time on the monitor VIDEOGRAPHER: 15 is 10:32 a.m., and we're back on the record. 16 BY MS. MADGAVKAR: 17 Q. Okay. So before moving on to -- to 18 the next topic, I just wanted to loop back, 19 briefly. And it might be helpful if you look 20 at -- at Exhibit 1, which is the subpoena. And 21 you can let me know when -- when you have it up. 22 Α. I see it. 23 0. So as we discussed earlier, you're the 24 designee for Topic 9, correct? 25 Α. That's correct.

Page 39 1 And just to make sure I have it right, Q. 2 your -- your testimony was that DSS has no 3 knowledge about whether permitting South Carolina CPAs to restrict eligibility of prospective foster 4 5 parents based on religion, same-sex relationship, or LGBTQ status had any effect on the number of 6 7 available foster parents in South Carolina? 8 MR. COLEMAN: Object to the form of the 9 question. 10 But you can answer, if you're able. 11 THE WITNESS: As far as I know, we did 12 not do any studies like this. I did not do any 13 studies like this. I do not know. 14 BY MS. MADGAVKAR: 15 Q. And -- and you're testifying on behalf 16 of DSS, right? 17 Α. Yes, I am. Again, I -- I am not aware of it. 18 19 So you said you're not aware of it, Q. 20 and that means that DSS has not done any kind of 21 study about that infor- -- information, right? 22 MR. COLEMAN: Object to the form of the 23 question. 24 But you can answer. 25 THE WITNESS: I am not aware of DSS

Page 40 1 doing any study on that particular subject. 2 -- I -- I am not aware. I'm sorry. BY MS. MADGAVKAR: 3 And -- and you're -- you're the only 4 Q. 5 DSS employee that would have done such a study? I really -- I -- I'm not sure. 6 7 don't believe that anybody else would have done it 8 at DSS, but DSS is a very large agency. But I'm 9 not aware of anybody having done that study. 10 And as part of your preparation for 11 the deposition, did you attempt to find out if 12 anybody had conducted the study? 13 Α. No, I did not, because I -- no -- no, 14 I did not. 15 Q. And did you discuss with anyone, or 16 did you attempt to find out whether anyone at DSS, 17 beyond a specific study, made any effort to examine the impact that these restrictions would 18 19 have on the number of available foster parents in 20 South Carolina? 21 So say your question again. 22 make sure I'm understanding it. 23 So beyond a -- a specific 0. Sure. 24 study, did you attempt to discern from anyone at 25 DSS whether DSS had looked into or examined the

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA GREENVILLE DISTRICT

Case No.: 6:19-cv-01567-JD

EDEN ROGERS and BRANDY WELCH,

Plaintiffs,

-against-

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES;

XAVIER BECERRA, in his official capacity as Secretary of the UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES;

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES;

JANUARY CONTRERAS, in her official capacity as the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Assistant Secretary of the ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES;

JEFF HILD, in his official capacity as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES;

HENRY MCMASTER, in his official capacity as Governor of the STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA; and

MICHAEL LEACH, in his official capacity as State Director of the SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES,

Defendants.

DECLARATION OF NEKKI SHUTT

I, NEKKI SHUTT, hereby declare as follows:

I am a member of the bar of South Carolina and a Partner in the law firm Burnette Shutt McDaniel, PA, counsel for Eden Rogers and Brandy Welch (together "Plaintiffs").

I submit this declaration in support of Plaintiffs' motion for summary judgment, filed on November 17, 2022.

- 1. Since 2019, I have served on the team of lawyers representing Plaintiffs in the above-captioned litigation, along with members of my co-counsel group, who are from Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP, American Civil Liberties Union Foundation, South Carolina Equality Coalition, Inc., Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.
- 2. In this litigation, the South Carolina Department of Social Services ("DSS") has taken the position that it "is unaware of any CPA serving in the Upstate Region [other than Miracle Hill] who will decline to work with a prospective foster parent on the basis of the prospective foster parent's religion or same-sex marriage." (Ex. A, February 18, 2022 Letter from Miles Coleman to Kate Janson at 2.)
- 3. DSS's counsel stated that DSS's knowledge is based on its review of "information provided to it by CPAs and its own records of any requests for exemptions and the receipt of any complaints (or the lack thereof)". (Ex. B, April 4, 2022 Letter from M. Coleman to K. Janson at 1.)
- 4. While discovery was ongoing, counsel for Plaintiffs learned through deposing DSS representatives that Heartfelt Calling contracts with DSS to serve as a "centralized application and intake line" for DSS. (Ex. C, Barton Tr. at 40:14-23.) DSS conducts "a large

portion" of its intake work "through [its] central intake system through Heartfelt Calling." (*Id.* at 35:08-11.)

- 5. When prospective foster families apply through Heartfelt Calling, they are directed to a list of CPAs and are provided information about each of those CPAs to find "the right fit for their family . . . for licensure." (*Id.* at 135:23-136:06.) Heartfelt Calling has a website listing CPAs serving the Upstate Region and this website specifically notes whether CPAs do *not* have religious requirements. (Ex. D, Staudt Tr. 99:23-100:04; Exhibit E, Staudt Dep. Ex. 13.)
- 6. On June 3, 2021, Heartfelt Calling's website stated that SC Church of God Home for Children serves only "Christian individuals and families of any denomination who want to foster and meet the basic requirements to do so in addition to signing a statement of faith and morality statement." (Ex. E, Staudt Dep. Ex. 13.)
- 7. On July 12, 2022, Heartfelt Calling's website stated that, "Miracle Hill serves Christian foster parents and requires families to complete a statement of faith." (Ex. F, Heartfelt Calling Website, July 12, 2022.) The website also stated that Connie Maxwell "serves Christian families who want to foster." (*Id.*)
- 8. On November 15, 2022, the foster care inquiry form on Miracle Hill's website stated: "As an evangelical Christian foster care agency, we believe foster parents are in a position of spiritual influence over the children in their homes. Therefore, we require that foster parents who partner with us be followers of Jesus Christ, be active in and accountable to a Christian church, and agree in belief and practice with our doctrinal statement". (Ex. G, Miracle Hill Website, November 15, 2022.)

- 9. **Exhibit A** is a true and correct copy of a letter from Miles Coleman to Kate Janson, dated February 18, 2022.
- 10. **Ex. B** is a true and correct copy of a letter from Miles Coleman to Kate Janson, dated April 4, 2022.
- 11. **Exhibit C** is a true and correct excerpted copy of Dawn Barton's deposition transcript.
- 12. **Exhibit D** is a true and correct excerpted copy of Lauren Staudt's deposition transcript.
- 13. **Exhibit E** is a true and correct copy of a page from Heartfelt Calling's website as it appeared on June 3, 2021 and as it was presented as an exhibit at Lauren Staudt's deposition on June 4, 2021.
- 14. **Exhibit F** is a true and correct copy of a page from Heartfelt Calling's website as it appeared on July 12, 2022.
- 15. **Exhibit G** is a true and correct copy of the foster care inquiry form as it appeared on Miracle Hill's website on November 15, 2022.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on November 17, 2022.

Nekki Shutt

6:19-cv-01567-JD Date Filed 11/17/22 Entry Number 243-38 Page 5 of 55

EXHIBIT A



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ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS AT LAW

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February 18, 2022

Via electronic mail

Kate Janson Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP Worldwide Plaza 825 Eighth Avenue New York, NY 10019-7475 kjanson@cravath.com

RE: Rogers et al. v. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Servs. et al.

Civil Action No. 6:19-cv-01567-JD (D.S.C.)

Our File No. 059326/01501

Kate:

I am writing in further response to your letter of January 11, 2022 and our subsequent written and telephonic correspondence relating to your informal discovery requests. This letter and the enclosed materials provide the requested information to the extent of SCDSS's ability, and this concludes our efforts related to your requests.

Enclosed with this communication are updated version of two documents discussed during Ms. Tester's deposition (Exhibits A and B of your letter of December 23, 2021). The enclosed versions of these documents contain data through December 31, 2021. Also enclosed are documents showing the number of children in foster care in the Upstate Region for each year of the past five years and the number of staff members providing support to foster families for each CPA serving the Upstate Region for each year of the past five years.

Earlier this week you received from me copies of SCDSS's current contracts for non-therapeutic foster care services with CPAs serving the Upstate Region. I have not gathered the contracts between adoption agencies and SCDSS even though adoption agencies can and sometimes do assist individuals and couples seeking licensure by SCDSS as foster parents, sometimes, though not always, in relation to an adoption. In addition, enclosed with this letter are SCDSS's current contracts for therapeutic foster care serves with the CPAs serving the Upstate Region.

In addition, you asked for information regarding the number of children in the Upstate Region who are eligible for adoption but for whom adoption placements have not been identified. As of February 1, 2022, there are 77 children in the Upstate Region who are legally free for adoption but for whom no adoptive placement has been identified. SCDSS further notes that due to the way

Rogers v. HHS et al. February 18, 2022 Page 2

its database and records are organized, and due to changes in that database and records organization in past years, any attempt to calculate these numbers for prior dates is both extremely labor intensive and may, in fact, yield inaccurate results. Accordingly, SCDSS has not and, indeed, cannot accurately calculate the number of children eligible for adoption but for whom an adoptive placement had not been identified in the Upstate Region in prior years.

You also asked for information regarding the number of foster parents working with Heartfelt Calling as compared to the number of foster parents working directly with a private CPA for each year of the past five years. After consultation with SCDSS's Accountability, Data, and Research Division, the Placement Division, and the Procurement Division, we have determined that SCDSS does not collection this information and, therefore, is unable to provide it to you.

In regard to your request for information relating to the CPAs listed in Exhibits A and B to your letter of December 23, Jackie Lowe previously testified regarding the CPAs that serve in or have offices in the Upstate and support non-therapeutic foster homes. *See* Lowe dep. Tr. at 190–97. In addition to the CPAs she discussed in her testimony, three additional CPAs listed in Exhibits A and B of your letter have offices in the Upstate and support non-therapeutic foster homes: (1) New Foundations – Therapeutic CPA (which is licensed both for therapeutic and non-therapeutic foster care), (2) Lifeline Children's Services, and (3) Adoption Advocacy, Inc. For the avoidance of doubt, enclosed with this letter is a document listing the CPAs serving in the Upstate Region along with their dates of licensure and whether they are licensed for therapeutic foster care, nontherapeutic foster care, or both.

You asked whether any therapeutic CPAs operating in the Upstate Region have also offered non-therapeutic foster care services, and, if so, how many non-therapeutic foster families been licensed by SCDSS in association with those CPAs during each of the past five years. As shown in the documents produced concurrently with this letter, all of the CPAs in the Upstate Region who are licensed for therapeutic foster care services are also licensed for non-therapeutic foster care, and some of the placements with which therapeutic CPAs assist are non-therapeutic placements. SCDSS was unable to determine, however, the number of non-therapeutic foster care licenses were assisted by the therapeutic component of those CPAs.

Finally, in regard to your questions regarding which CPAs serving in the Upstate Region "accept" or "exclude" prospective foster parents on the basis of the prospective foster parents' same-sex marriage or religion, as noted in my prior response to your letter, Ms. Lowe has already testified on behalf of SCDSS in response to those questions. SCDSS's answer remains the same: with the exception of Miracle Hill Ministries, SCDSS is unaware of any CPA serving in the Upstate Region who will decline to work with a prospective foster parent on the basis of the prospective foster parent's religion or same-sex marriage.

Very truly yours,

Miles E. Coleman

Rogers v. HHS et al. February 18, 2022 Page 3

CC: (by electronic mail):

Peter Barbur
M. Malissa Burnette
Serena Candelaria
Bob Cook
Currey Cook
Leslie Cooper
William Jordan
Daniel Mach
Mika Madgavkar
Christie Newman
James Powers
Christopher Ray
Rebecca Schindel
Nekki Shutt
Jay Thompson

Ken Woodington

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EXHIBIT B



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April 4, 2022

Via electronic mail

Kate Janson Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP Worldwide Plaza 825 Eighth Avenue New York, NY 10019-7475 kjanson@cravath.com

RE: Rogers et al. v. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Servs. et al.

Civil Action No. 6:19-cv-01567-JD (D.S.C.)

Our File No. 059326/01501

Dear Kate:

Pursuant to our discussion with Judge Dawson on March 15, 2022 and our subsequent meet-and-confer on March 30, 2022, I write in further reply to your letter of February 23, 2022 and, in particular, to your inquiry about SCDSS's knowledge regarding CPAs in the Upstate Region that will work with prospective foster parents, including same-sex couples, without regard to the CPA's religious beliefs or the prospective foster parents' religious beliefs. Over more than 18 months of discovery, Plaintiffs have repeatedly asked—and SCDSS has repeatedly answered—this question. Nevertheless, in a good-faith effort to resolve outstanding areas of disagreement, and pursuant to Judge Dawson's instructions, SCDSS provides this additional response.

As explained previously, SCDSS's knowledge is based on its review of the information provided to it by CPAs and its own records of any requests for exemptions and the receipt of any complaints (or the lack thereof). Accordingly, SCDSS's response to your question is based on the fact that no CPAs other than Miracle Hill have sought to claim an exception or exemption; the fact that extensive discovery in this case and a related case has not uncovered any evidence of CPAs other than Miracle Hill which, on the basis of the CPA's religious beliefs or the prospective foster parents' same-sex marriage or religious beliefs, will refer to other CPAs or to SCDSS inquiries or applications they receive from prospective foster parents; the fact that SCDSS's personnel annually request and review each CPA's policies, procedures, and materials as part of the annual CPA licensing process (which is the way that SCDSS became aware of Miracle Hill's policy) but have found no indication therein of any CPA other than Miracle Hill that will refer applications to another CPA or to SCDSS if the prospective foster parent cannot affirm and adhere to the CPA's religious beliefs and requirements; and the fact that SCDSS provides avenues for prospective foster

Rogers v. HHS et al. April 4, 2022 Page 2

parents to submit complaints to SCDSS, including complaints regarding CPAs, and SCDSS has received no complaints regarding any other CPA that, on the basis of its religious beliefs or the prospective foster parents' same-sex marriage or religious beliefs, is unwilling to work with individuals or couples who inquire about becoming foster parents.

Based on this information and review, to SCDSS's knowledge, all of the CPAs serving in the Upstate, with the exception of Miracle Hill Ministries, are willing to work with prospective foster parents, including same-sex couples, without regard to additional criteria based on the CPA's own religious beliefs or the prospective foster parents' religious beliefs.

Very truly yours,

Miles E. Coleman

CC: (by electronic mail):

Peter Barbur M. Malissa Burnette Serena Candelaria Bob Cook Currey Cook

Leslie Cooper

William Jordan

Daniel Mach

Mika Madgavkar

Christie Newman

James Powers

Christopher Ray

Rebecca Schindel

Nekki Shutt

Ken Woodington

6:19-cv-01567-JD Date Filed 11/17/22 Entry Number 243-38 Page 12 of 55

EXHIBIT C

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Page 1
1
                 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
                 DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
2
                 GREENVILLE DIVISION
3
    EDEN ROGERS AND BRANDY WELCH,
                Plaintiffs,
4
            vs. C/A No. 6:19-cv-01567-JD
5
    UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH &
    HUMAN SERVICES; XAVIER BECERA, IN HIS
6
    OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS SECRETARY OF THE
7
    UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH &
    HUMAN SERVICES; ADMINISTRATION FOR
8
    CHILDREN AND FAMILIES; JOOYEUN CHANG, IN
    HER OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS THE SENIOR
    OFFICIAL PERFORMING THE DUTIES OF THE
    ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE
10
    ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND
    FAMILIES; JOOYEUN CHANG, IN HER OFFICIAL
11
    CAPACITY AS PRINCIPAL
    DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE
12
    ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND
    FAMILIES; HENRY MCMASTER, IN HIS
13
    OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS GOVERNOR OF THE
    STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA; AND MICHAEL
14
    LEACH, IN HIS OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS STATE
    DIRECTOR OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA
    DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES,
15
                 Defendants.
16
17
18
    VTC 30(b)(6)
                      SC DSS, Through its agent:
    DEPOSITION OF:
                      DAWN BARTON
19
    DATE:
                      December 17, 2021
20
                      9:33 a.m.
    TIME:
    LOCATION:
                      Zoom - Columbia, SC
21
22
                      Counsel for the Plaintiffs
    TAKEN BY:
    REPORTED BY: Roxanne Easterwood, RPR VIDEOGRAPHER: Roosevelt Hamilton
23
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	Page 2
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kin, under- -- understanding it's a broader definition of kin, based on what DSS considers kin, can parents who are not kin -- potential foster parents who are not kin no longer apply directly through DSS to become licensed?

A. So this was a -- this was a practice change and not a policy change. Let me clarify that. This was something that we decided to -- we needed to build some capacity to be able to really intensify our search and engagement and recruitment of kinship families. And so we transitioned all of that work to our child-placing agencies.

And so with that being said, we -- we wouldn't deny somebody the ability to come -- to -- to still come, and if they didn't want to work with any of our CPAs today, they -- we would still support them through the licensure process. They could still -- they could still come through DSS if for some reason they did not want to work with one of the child-placing agencies. So we wouldn't deny anybody that -- that ability.

Q. Was the reason for the change in practice because DSS didn't have the capacity to handle all of these applications itself; it needed

to offload some of this work onto the CPAs?

- A. The change of practice was so that we could really intensify our focus and efforts on kinship care.
- Q. But -- but just so I understand, the idea being that you couldn't do both; you couldn't focus your efforts on kinship care and also handle all of these non-kinship applications?
- Α. It was a way for us to be able to have the capacity to -- to do a targeted focus on recruiting and licensing and engaging our kinship opportunities for our kids, and it also was a way to really try to build our placement array, frankly, because if you -- if you're just focused on recruiting non-kin families, A, kids do better when they're with people that they're connected to and they already know. It's less traumatic. There's so many benefits to kinship care; and B, if you have kinship and non-kin families that you are able to place kids with, that just expands your family-like settings for -for kids.
- Q. Right. But assuming that -- that people who previously were able to work with DSS are now able to work with CPAs; is that right?

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A. I don't understand the question.

- Q. Well, your answer about expanding the array assumes that the people who previously were able to work with DSS can now work with private CPAs; is that right?
- A. They can work with private. They've always been able to work with -- with private CPAs. That's always been an -- an option. We just really, we just shifted a large portion of the work through our central intake system through Heartfelt Calling.

That -- that's the centralized place that all of the applications and intakes funnel through. We contract with -- with them to -- to do that piece of the work for us, and so now that families were just given more choices other than DSS.

- Q. So -- so Heartfelt Calling is a central place -- so -- so if I'm a potential foster parent, I'm not kinship, I'm not kin to any potential child, I would go to Heartfelt Calling to apply to become a foster parent?
- A. That -- you can go -- that -- that's where most people go because it's -- it's sort of the centralized place that is designated to do

Page 36 1 They could go directly to a CPA. 2 think it happens both ways. 3 Do you have a sense -- you -- you said 0. most people do Heartfelt Calling. Is that 4 5 something that DSS tracks? 6 Α. Yes. 7 Okay. And do you have a sense of --Q. 8 of the breakdown and how many people go through 9 Heartfelt Calling versus working directly with a 10 private CPA? 11 I don't -- I don't have -- I don't Α. 12 know if I have the private CPA data, like -- well, 13 I shouldn't say I. 14 I think we could get the C- -- the 15 private CPA data. Heartfelt Calling tracks all of 16 the calls and applicants that they get through --17 through our centralized line. And when you say we, DSS, could get 18 Q. 19 the private CPA data, does that mean that DSS has 20 that data or that DSS could ask for that data? 21 I'm not sure if that's something we 22 track through the contracts. If that's -- you 23 know, they have reporting requirements through the 24 contracts. So I don't know if that's the natural

part of what they report, or if we would have to

actually ask them for it.

- Q. Has DSS ever asked private CPAs how many people are applying through them to become foster care parents?
 - A. Yes.
 - Q. When does it ask that question?
- A. We -- I know we started tracking this somewhat. We have to report through our annual progress and services reporting for the federal government, and so, you know, that's some of the information that -- that I believe we supply for that -- those reporting purp- -- reporting purposes annually. So I do think that -- if that's data that you -- you would be interested in, I do think that's something that we could get for you.
- Q. Fantastic. Okay. And so just -- just to make sure I'm clear about what it is, it would be data that would show how many people are applying directly through private CPAs to become foster parents, you -- you think that would be data you would have?
- A. Yes. I can def- -- I -- I can most definitely say that Heartfelt Calling has been tracking that since -- at least since July, since

Page 38 1 we started transitioning that work over to the 2 child-placing agencies. They have a breakdown 3 of -- of what that is. Okay. And -- and then, hopefully, 4 Q. 5 there would also be a breakdown for the private C--- for the direct channel in --6 7 Α. Yes. 8 -- the Heartfelt Calling -- okay. 0. 9 Terrific. 10 So, Miles, I may not MS. SCHINDEL: 11 call this out every time, but I will -- we will 12 make sure to gather all of this up and make sure 13 that we're following up with you afterwards. 14 MR. COLEMAN: Yes. That's on -- I 15 think this one, too, we can -- we can figure it 16 out, you know, next week. I think we may -- if 17 I'm understanding what you're looking for, you may 18 already have that data from Diana's deposition 19 yesterday, but we -- we can -- we can figure that 20 out Monday or something like that. 21 MS. SCHINDEL: Okay. Great. Thank you. 22 BY MS. SCHINDEL: 23 And if -- if someone applied to work 0. 24 directly with a CPA and were turned away by that 25 CPA for whatever reason, would DSS learn about

Page 39 1 that? 2 Α. The only way we would learn about it 3 would be if -- if the family contacted us or -or -- and -- and that's the only way we would know 4 5 about it. Okay. So DSS wouldn't -- there's no, 6 0. 7 sort of, tracking mechanism for DSS to account for 8 who's applying and being turned away? 9 Α. Each CPA, as I understand, tracks 10 that, but that is not something that we track. 11 And when you say each CPA tracks that, 0. 12 is it tracked -- what makes you say that each CPA 13 tracks that data? 14 I mean, I'm -- I'm making a large 15 assumption that -- that that would be something 16 that a CPA would track, but we do not -- we do not 17 track that. We actually don't even get -- from --18 from a child-placing agency, we -- we don't get 19 the actual packet for licensure. That's kind of 20 when we become aware that -- that -- that an applicant has applied and -- and the CPA has been 21 22 working with them. 23 Now, Heartfelt Calling, obviously, 24 collects data on the front end. So if that applicant came in through Heartfelt Calling, 25

Heartfelt Calling would -- would track -- they follow up with the child-placing agencies that these families have chosen to go to, and they follow up to -- to -- to determine, because they're tracking how -- you know, when -- when they actually finish the process. So when they started the application and then when an -- when a license was actually issued.

So if they came through Heartfelt Calling, I'd say, again, starting last July to current, we probably would be able to have that information, but otherwise, prior to that time we would not have necessarily known.

- Q. Got it. And what -- why don't you explain, sort of, what Heartfelt Calling is?
- A. So we have a contract with the South Carolina Foster Parent Association, and there's several components within that contract that they provide support to the agency for, and one of the components is Heartfelt Calling.

And so it is the centralized application and intake line that they have. It's HeartfeltCalling.org. There's a, like, 1-88 (sic) number that people can call. They have a couple of folks on staff that, if you call, if you email,

they will walk you through the application process, and they have -- and so they do all of that upfront work, and then they -- they send that application to whatever -- today, to whatever child-placing agency a family chooses.

So they don't choose the family for -choose the CPA for the family. The family is
given a list of all of the available CPAs, and -and they -- they then choose their own.

- Q. And did Heartfelt Calling exist before July 2020?
 - A. Oh, yes.
- Q. But it played, it sounds like, a different -- a slightly different role before that time; is that right?
- A. They were -- they were just main -- I mean, at that time, prior to last July -- prior to July 2020, they were just screening applicants for us, for -- for DSS, and then we -- when we shifted some of that work and shared that work with the CPAs, they began doing that upfront screening and -- and work for -- to help -- help the CPAs and the families get to where they wanted to go.
- Q. So I'm going to ask you a couple of more state-related questions, and you can just

tell me. If it's something that you know the answer, terrific. Otherwise, tell me if -- DSS to provide is, which is, before July 2020, how many families per year, say, roughly, starting in 2018, did DSS recruit who were not applying under the kinship care umbrella?

- A. So I don't have that data in my head, but that is data that we would be able to -- to get you.
- Q. And then the -- the same question slightly different is, before July 2020, how many families were trying to serve as kinship care foster parents?
- A. Yeah, I -- we would -- we could -- we could try to get you that data. Again, we -- we began tracking that data pretty closely, and our big push with kinship started roughly two years ago. So -- so you will -- you will see a huge increase between, I'd say, like, 20- -- the end of 2018 to -- to now or either 20- -- early 2019 to now.

We -- we have had a large spike in the number of licensed kinship care providers, because we started off with, really, like, around, I want to say, 5 and -- and now we're -- we're into the

aware of the screening criteria implemented by the CPAs in South Carolina?

A. Yes.

- Q. And DSS tracks that information?
- A. Again, I think -- I think your -- your track is -- is -- is throwing me. We're aware of the CP- -- of each individual CPA's criteria, but -- but as far as -- I don't know what you mean by tracking that.
- Q. And you're aware of each individual CPA criteria how? By -- by simply by looking at the CPA's website, or does DSS follow up with the CPAs or in some way ask CPAs to tell them what their screening criteria are?
- A. So that would be a part of -- of their submission when they become a CPA. That -- that would be part of information that -- that they provide to us as a child-placing agency, when they're issued -- when they're the child-placing agency license.
- Q. Okay. Can you tell me on this list which CPAs that DSS knows accepts families regardless of sexual orientation or religion?
 - A. DSS would know all of them.
 - Q. And can you tell me which ones on the

- list DSS knows accepts families regardless of sexual orientation or religion?
- A. I can tell you the ones that -- that

 I, today, as the DSS representative know, which

 may not -- which may not be inclusive of all of -
 you know, of all of them on the list.
- Q. Yeah, I think -- I think you should go ahead and do that, because I do think that this is a topic that you were meant to be educated on. So I think you should -- I think you should go ahead and do that.
- A. So ask -- so can you ask the question again?
- Q. Yes. Which of these on this list does
 DSS know accepts families regardless of sexual
 orientation or religion?
- A. Okay. So it would be Alston Wilkes,
 Broadstep, CAPA, Family Preservation, Growing
 Homes Southeast, Crosswell, Justice Works -- which
 Justice Works, I wasn't aware they even had
 families. They -- they provide services. So I
 don't even know that that's related to this -- but
 New Foundations, SC Mentor, SC YAP, Specialized
 Alternative Youth. And those are the ones that
 I'm aware of.

Page 135 Q. Okay. And so then for the rest, does DSS know which agencies exclude families based on religion or sexual orientation? Α. DSS --MR. COLEMAN: Same -- same objection. But you can answer. THE WITNESS: DSS would know -- would know -- would know that information or does know that information, so yes. BY MS. SCHINDEL: Okay. And so how many -- so DSS knows 0. exactly how many CS- -- CPA options are available for non-Christians and for same-sex couples? Α. Yes. And what -- does DSS do anything to Q. relay that information to anybody? So if -- if you go on the -- the Α. HeartfeltCalling.org website, there is a list of the CPAs, and -- and it -- it does -- they -- they share just a little bit about who -- what their mission is and -- and -- and so that's -- I mean, that's how families are directed. When they -- when they apply today through Heartfelt Calling, they're directed to a

list of CPAs, and -- and there's -- there's

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Page 136 1 information about each of those CPAs the CPA has 2 provided about their organizations, so the 3 families can make the right -- you know, make the right fit for their family for who they want to 4 5 work with on collecting all of the requirements 6 for licensure. 7 So does that -- that website that Ο. 8 you're referring me to, does it say Miracle Hill 9 will not work with same-sex couples? 10 I have not looked at -- looked at that 11 in some time. So I -- I can't say that it says 12 that specifically or not. I would -- I would have 13 to -- I would have to look at it. 14 Then how do you reconcile those two 0. 15 statements that you just gave me? You said a 16 family can go to the website and know exactly who 17 they can work with, but you actually don't know if 18 the website, in fact, does provide that 19 information; is that right? 20 MR. COLEMAN: Object to the form of the 21 question. 22 You can answer. 23 It gives information THE WITNESS: 24 about the organization, which could include that.

25

BY MS. SCHINDEL:

Page 137 1 Right. But the information might not Q. 2 actually tell families who they can and cannot 3 work with; is that right? 4 Α. That's correct. 5 0. In total, how many non-therapeutic 6 CPAs serve Region 1? 7 I don't have -- I don't have that information. I -- I didn't -- I don't have those 8 9 numbers. 10 Same objection. I object MR. COLEMAN: 11 to --12 (Crosstalk.) 13 THE WITNESS: I mean, we have those 14 I just don't have those numbers here 15 today. 16 BY MS. SCHINDEL: 17 If DSS learns that most of the Ο. 18 non-therapeutic CPAs that serve Region 1 excludes 19 same-sex couples, would that concern DSS? 20 I think it would -- I -- I think it 21 would concern us, but I also would say that, in 22 the same light, families always have another 23 They can always come through DSS. 24 Q. If most of the non-therapeutic CPAs 25 that serve Region 1 excluded same-sex couples,

Page 138 1 could that harm efforts to grow the pool of foster 2 families in Region 1? 3 I -- I would say, no, because we would Α. serve -- we would serve those families. There --4 5 there's still an option for those families through 6 the department. 7 Since DSS changed its practice to Q. 8 handle just kinship applicants, you said that, and 9 you're saying now, that DSS would handle 10 non-kinship applicants if the family didn't want to work with a particular CPA; is that right? 11 12 Α. Yes. 13 Q. Has DSS handled any non-kinship 14 applicants since the change in policy? 15 I -- I don't -- I don't know. I would Α. 16 have to look at -- at each region to make that 17 determination, if -- if we've actually accepted. 18 It's been very few, if -- if any. 19 MS. SCHINDEL: Okay. Well, this is 20 definitely Topic 5. So this -- this is 21 information we absolutely will need to get from 22 DSS, which is whether DSS has handled any non- --23 non-kinship applicants since the change in 24 practice or policy. And if so, how many.

BY MS. SCHINDEL:

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EXHIBIT D

	Page 1
1	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
2	GREENVILLE DIVISION
3	
4	EDEN ROGERS and
5	BRANDY WELCH,
_	Plaintiffs,
6	vs. CASE NO. 6:19-cv-01567-TMC
7	
8	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES;
9	ALEX AZAR, in his official capacity as SECRETARY of the UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
10	HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES;
11	ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES;
12	LYNN JOHNSON, in her official capacity as ASSISTANT SECRETARY of the ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND
13	FAMILIES;
14	SCOTT LEKAN, in his official capacity as PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY of the ADMINISTRATION
15	FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES;
16	HENRY MCMASTER, in his official capacity as GOVERNOR of the STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA;
17	
18	MICHAEL LEACH, in his official capacity as STATE DIRECTOR of the SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES,
19	SERVICES,
00	Defendants.
20	VIDEOTAPED
21	DEPOSITION OF: LAUREN COLLINS STAUDT (APPEARING VIA VIRTUAL ZOOM)
22	DATE: June 4, 2021
23	TIME: 9:05 AM
24	REPORTED BY: TERRI L. BRUSSEAU
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	AND FAMILIES:		
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		Darin Weaver, Video Technician
4		(Appearing Via Virtual Zoom)
5		(INDEX AT REAR OF TRANSCRIPT)
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Page 98 1 We are not -- we have not been made Α. 2 aware of any others. 3 0. Have you taken any steps to figure out which ones will only work with foster parents that 4 5 share their religious beliefs? 6 Α. Not -- no. 7 Are you familiar with the South Q. 8 Carolina Foster Parent Association? 9 Α. To some degree, yes. 10 What is the South Carolina Foster Ο. 11 Parent Association? 12 Α. It's a -- it's an association to 13 support foster parents and the -- you know, the 14 overall community that involves, you know, 15 providers, potential applicants, et cetera. 16 Is it affiliated with DSS? 17 Α. I mean, they're kind of a partner or 18 stakeholder, but not employees of DSS. 19 Are you -- excuse me. Are you familiar Q. 20 with Heartfelt Calling? 21 Α. Yes. 22 Q. What is Heartfelt Calling? 23 I think it's kind of an arm of that, 24 that -- that's where all the initial -- or when 25 potential foster parents' applicants, they go to

Page 99 1 Heartfelt Calling first to kind of -- I mean, they 2 can go to the individual CPAs, but most of them go 3 through Heartfelt Calling so that they can kind of get their training and get a lot of the initial 4 5 things done before they go to a CPA. 6 Is DSS affiliated with Heartfelt 7 Calling? 8 I don't know exactly the -- how 9 intertwined it is, if it's a contract or what, but, 10 you know, it's kind of a partner as well. 11 MS. SCHINDEL: Can we mark Tab 43. 12 (EXHIBIT 13, Document entitled DSS 13 Licensing Partners for the Upstate SC, was marked 14 for identification.) 15 MS. JANSON: Okay. That one's been 16 marked. 17 BY MS. SCHINDEL: 18 Ο. I'll just read into the record while 19 waiting for you. This is Exhibit 13. It's not 20 Bates stamped. It's a printout from a Web page. 21 And if you could let me know when you have it 22 available. 23 I'm sorry, do you -- okay. This is a 24 printout of the Heartfelt Calling website for the 25 page called DSS Licensing Partners for the Upstate

Page 100 1 of South Carolina. Have you seen this Web page 2 before? 3 It's been awhile, but, yeah, I have Α. seen it at some point. 4 5 And you see it's just the Greenville 6 button is expanded. Do you see that? 7 Α. Um-hum. 8 And do you see for Epworth it says: 0. 9 Epworth serves married couples and singles who want 10 The agency serves families from any to foster. 11 faith background and training is not faith-based. 12 Is that right? 13 Α. Yeah. 14 This indicates that Epworth did not 15 serve unmarried cohabitating couples, is that 16 right? 17 I mean, it could mean that. I don't --Α. I don't know. 18 19 Do you know whether Epworth serves 20 unmarried cohabitating couples? 21 I'm not aware one way or the other. Α. 22 Q. Do you see Lutheran -- Lutheran, it 23 says -- oh, interesting. I apologize. It was --24 it seems this has been cut off. 25 Do you see for -- for Miracle Hill and

Page 101 1 the South Carolina Church of God Home For Children 2 it says that both CPAs require statements of faith? 3 Α. Yes, I see that. Um-hum. Were you aware that Miracle -- Miracle 4 Q. 5 Hill requires that -- applicants to complete a statement of faith? 6 7 Α. Yes, I'm aware from the past, yes. 8 Were you aware that South Church --0. 9 South Carolina Church of God Home For Children 10 requires families to complete a statement of faith? 11 I don't know if I was. I don't 12 think -- I don't think I was aware of that. 13 Q. Is it fair to say that you aren't aware 14 of what the requirements are for that statement of 15 faith? 16 That's fair. Α. 17 Do you know whether it's clear from 18 South Carolina -- do you know whether South 19 Carolina Church of God Home For Children makes 20 clear that they require a statement of faith to 21 potential applicants or to DSS? 22 Α. No, I don't know. 23 0. Do you know who provides the 24 information that appears on this Heartfelt Calling

web page?

Page 102 1 Α. No, I don't. 2 Q. Is someone at DSS responsible for 3 assessing which CPAs require statements of faith or limit individuals in terms of their work? 4 5 I'm not aware of someone with that 6 task. 7 In your experience in the child welfare Q. 8 field, do you believe that allowing agencies to 9 exclude families based on their religious 10 objections to those families' religion or sexual 11 orientation has any effect on the pool of families 12 available for children? 13 MR. COLEMAN: Object to the form of the 14 question. 15 THE WITNESS: Do I think it limits it? 16 Yes. 17 BY MS. SCHINDEL: 18 In your experience has allowing such Q. 19 discrimination hindered DSS's efforts to meet the 20 need for potential foster families? 21 DSS needs many foster families and 22 we're in need of fosters now, so we're, you know, 23 eliminating potentials that I think it does hurt 24 that. 25 Q. Would you agree that more than one CPA

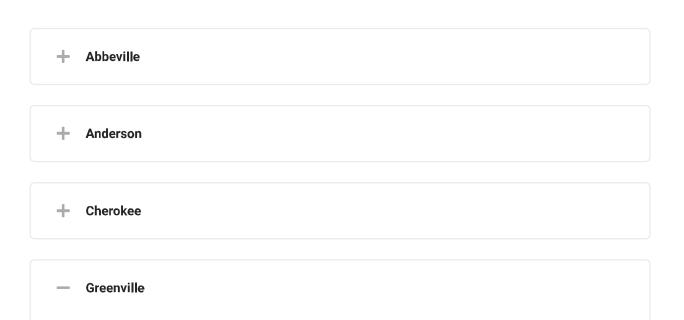
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EXHIBIT E

DSS Licensing Partners - Upstate SC - Heartfelt Calling - SC Foster Parents

Exhibit 0013 Lauren Staudt

DSS Licensing Partners for the Upstate of SC



FOSTER HOME LICENSING AGENCY SELECTION

https://heartfeltcalling.org/dss-licensing-partners-upstate-sc/

Select the agency you would like to use for taking you through the licensing process.

Oasis of Hope is a Christian-based agency, but works with any individual or family who has a desire to make a difference in a child's life. There is no requirement for additional training beyond the 14 hours of pre-service training, unless specific needs of the child warrant additional instruction.

Thornwell began licensing foster families in 2017 and serves all types of families.

Epworth serves married couples and singles who want to foster. The agency serves families from any faith background and training is not faith-based.

SC YAP works with any individual or family who has a desire to serve children.



Call Us: -888-828-3555



Growing Homes SE works with any individual or family who has a desire to serve children.

Connie Maxwell serves married couples and single parents who want to foster.

Miracle Hill serves Christian foster parents and requires families to complete a statement of faith.

SC Church of God Home for Children serves Christian individuals and families of any denomination who want to foster and meet the basic requirements to do so in addition to signing a statement of faith and morality statement.

Nightlight Foster Care Program serves married couples that have been together at least two years and singles over the age of 25 who want to foster. The agency serves families from any faith background and training is not faith-based.

New Foundations' CONNECTIONS Foster Care Program works with all individuals and families who have a desire to care for the needs of children. We are here to serve those willing to make a difference in a child's life.

+	Greenwood
+	Oconee
+	Laurens
+	Newberry
+	Pickens
+	Spartanburg

DSS Licensing Partners - Upstate SC - Heartfelt Calling - SC Foster Parents

∷ DSS Licensing Partners

Privacy - Terms

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EXHIBIT F

Greenville

Foster Home Licensing Agency Selection

Select the agency you would like to use for taking you through the licensing process.



Nightlight Foster Care Program

Nightlight Foster Care Program serves married couples that have been together at least two years and singles over the age of 25 who want to foster. The agency serves families from any faith background and training is not faithbased.



Oasis of Hope

Oasis of Hope is a Christian-based agency but works with any individual or family who has a desire to make a difference in a child's life. There is no requirement for additional training beyond pre-service training unless specific needs of the child warrant additional instruction.



SC YAP

SC YAP works with any individual or family who has a desire to serve children.



Miracle Hill

Miracle Hill serves Christian foster parents and requires families to complete a statement of faith.



The Bair Foundation

The Bair Foundation is a Christian therapeutic agency that licenses families for foster children 0-21. We work with therapeutic, medically fragile and special needs foster children. To serve the needs of DSS, they will place non-therapeutic children as well. We do not discriminate and open our doors to married, single, cohabitating, same sex couples, and all religious backgrounds. 32 recertification hours are required every two years for re-licensure for therapeutic homes.



Epworth

Epworth licenses and supports individuals or married couples/families who desire to provide a loving, safe, and temporary home where hurts are healed, and hope is nurtured for children in foster care. Epworth trains those individuals through evidence-based models to equip them with interventions to work with children that have encountered traumatic situations.



Lutheran

Lutheran is affiliated with the Lutheran Church, but serves all families and does not require a statement of faith. Families do not need to be Christian to foster with Lutheran.



Thornwell

Thornwell began licensing foster families in 2017 and serves all types of families.
Thornwell serves Anderson, Greenville,
Laurens, Spartanburg, Lexington, Sumter,
Richland and Horry Counties. Thornwell only
licenses non-therapeutic homes. The training
hours required to become licensed are a total
of 14 hours completed prior to licensing. 28
hours of recertification training hours are
required within 24 months of licensure in order
to maintain foster home license. Recertification training/topics are at the
discretion of the foster parent/family



Growing Homes SE

Growing Homes SE works with any individual or family who has a desire to serve children.



Connie Maxwell

Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries (CMCM) serves Christian families who want to foster. CMCM seeks to establish relationships with local churches where the foster parent attends to provide a framework for volunteer services that can support and encourage families during their foster care journey.

1 2

Foster Home Licensing Agencies in S.C.

Select the **region** and then **county** to display agencies in your area that can help you with the licensing process.







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EXHIBIT G



Agreement with Doctrinal Statement *

As an evangelical Christian foster care agency, we believe foster parents are in a position of spiritual influence over the children in their homes. Therefore, we require that foster parents who partner with us be followers of Jesus Christ, be active in and accountable to a Christian church, and agree in belief and practice with our doctrinal statement (found below and on our website at http://miraclehill.org/who-we-are/doctrinal-statement/). Before proceeding, please read our doctrinal statement. If after reading our doctrinal statement you find that Miracle Hill Foster Care is not a good fit for you, please let us connect you with another agency that can meet your needs. ------ Doctrinal Statement------ We believe: ---the Bible to be the only inspired, infallible, inerrant and authoritative Word of God. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21) ---that there is one God, creator of heaven and earth, eternally existent in three distinctive persons: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (1 Tim. 2:5; Gen. 1:1; Mt. 3:16-17; Mt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 10:30) ---in the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ; that He was born of a virgin; that we are redeemed by His atoning death through His shed blood; that He bodily resurrected and ascended into heaven and that He will come again in power and great glory to judge the living and the dead. (Eph. 1:7-10; Acts 1:9-11; Mt. 1:23-25; 1 Cor 15:1-8; 2 Tim 4:1) ---in the value and dignity of all people created in God's image, but alienated from God and each other because of our sin and guilt and justly subject to God's wrath. (Gen. 1:26-27; Psalm 139:13; Mt. 22:37-39; Rom. 12:20-21; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 5:12) ---that regeneration by the Holy Spirit by grace through faith is essential for the salvation of lost and sinful people. (Tit. 3:4-7; Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Cor. 6:2) ---in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting solely through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. (Col. 1:13-14; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; John 3:16) ---that the Holy Spirit unites all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and that together they form one body – the church. (1 Cor. 12:12-13; 1 Cor. 12:27) --- God ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption, and that God's design for marriage is the legal joining of one man and one woman in a life-long covenant relationship. (Gen. 1:26-28; Eph. 5:21-6:4; Mt. 19:4-6) ---God creates each person as either male or female, and these two distinct, complementary sexes, together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen. 1:27; Gen. 2:18)

☐ Yes, I have read and agree with Miracle Hill's doctrinal statement.

Name *

First

6:19-cv-01567-JD Date Filed 11/17/22 Entry Number 243-38 Page 50 of 55 11/16/22, 7:23 PM Foster Care Inquiry Form - Miracle Hill Ministries Last Email * Address * Street Address Address Line 2 City State / Province / Region ZIP / Postal Code Phone * Date of Birth *

mm/dd/yyyy

direction.

Submit



490 S. Pleasantburg Drive Greenville, SC 29607

864.268.4357

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Foster Care Inquiry Form - Miracle Hill Ministries Page 55 of 55

11/16/22, 7:23 PM

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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA GREENVILLE DIVISION

EDEN ROGERS and

BRANDY WELCH,

Plaintiffs,

-against-

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES;

ALEX AZAR, in his official capacity as Secretary of the UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES;

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES;

LYNN JOHNSON, in her official capacity as Assistant Secretary of the ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES;

SCOTT LEKAN, in his official capacity as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES;

HENRY MCMASTER, in his official capacity as Governor of the STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA; and

MICHAEL LEACH, in his official capacity as State Director of the SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES,

Defendants.

Case No. 6:19-cv-01567-JD

DECLARATION OF DAVID WOOD

DECLARATION OF DAVID WOOD

- I, David Wood, do declare as follows:
- I make this declaration of my own personal knowledge; if called as a witness,
 I would be competent to testify to the contents hereof.
- 2. I am 40 years old and live in Greenville, South Carolina with my wife of sixteen years and our three children, a five-year-old daughter, an eleven-year-old son, and a fourteen-year-old daughter. I am employed as an information security engineer and my wife is a student and stay-at-home parent. Our children attend school in Greenville.
- 3. In 2015, my wife and I became foster parents through working with the child placing agency ("CPA") Miracle Hill Ministries in Greenville and were licensed by the State of South Carolina Department of Social Services ("DSS"). At the time, I was a member of a church that aligned with Miracle Hill's doctrinal statement. From 2015 to 2018 we fostered through Miracle Hill Ministries. Our first two foster children were able to reunify with their families. Our third foster child was four days old when she was placed in our home and, in 2018, we were thrilled to adopt her and have her join her siblings who are our biological children.
- 4. In 2021, we learned that someone close to us is a member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer ("LGBTQ") community. This caused us to reevaluate our beliefs and join a different church that is inclusive of the LGBTQ community, First Baptist Church in Greenville.
- 5. I also became an active member of the Greenville chapter of PFLAG, a membership organization dedicated to uniting parents, families, and allies, with people who are LGBTQ, and often support families, advocate, and educate others.

- 6. After adopting our daughter, we decided to stop being foster parents. But as a former foster parent, I am aware of the huge need for foster families in South Carolina and so have continued to work on recruitment in my community and in my church. Because of my experience, I have tried to serve as a helpful liaison between people interested in fostering and South Carolina DSS as well as the various CPAs in the area.
- 7. Also, over the past year, I became aware of the specific need for foster homes for LGBTQ youth in foster care in South Carolina. Specifically, I was aware of a gay young man and a transgender young woman who were both in need of homes that would support and affirm them, but none were available.
- 8. A DSS regional director and two DSS staff members from another DSS region recently came to one of our PFLAG Greenville meetings actively soliciting families that will take LGBTQ youth in the system into their homes, so they do not have to be placed in group homes and other congregate care. They mentioned that many families are unwilling or not equipped to foster LGBTQ-identified youth, so it is difficult to find families to care for them. Other DSS officials I have communicated with, including DSS caseworkers from the Upstate DSS region where I live, have also mentioned this challenge.
- 9. I was aware of the lawsuit connected with Miracle Hill Ministries' policies around foster parent recruiting and screening and Governor Henry McMaster's Executive Order permitting CPAs to use faith-based criteria in deciding whether they would work with people seeking to become foster parents. I realized that in order to provide the most helpful information to members of my church, PFLAG members, and others in the community interested in becoming foster parents, I needed to have more information about which CPAs worked with all families, including same-sex couples and LGBTQ people.

- 10. I knew South Carolina Youth Advocate Program ("SCYAP") had a nondiscrimination statement but for other CPAs, it was unclear from publicly available information which agencies work with everyone regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or relationship status or with people of all faiths or no church or faith affiliation.
- 11. In January of 2022, I was in touch with Amber Peeples, the South Carolina DSS Foster Parent Liaison. I knew she was the person in the DSS state office to go to with general questions or concerns regarding the state child welfare system and foster parenting.
- 12. There were some changes around licensing requirements for foster parents or foster parent applicants with swimming pools and Amber had been assisting me with answers to questions around those new requirements. She was a very helpful resource.
- 13. After receiving answers from Amber about the swimming pool questions and still under the email subject line, "Re: Vaccine and Pool Updates," I decided to ask her which agencies work with same-sex couples and LGBTQ individuals. On January 24, 2022, at 9:36 am, I sent a voice to text email to Amber saying, "I can't remember if it was you I was talking to about this but also in the community there recently has come a need to understand which agencies are licensing LGBTQ families at this time. I know some are moving in that direction but not there yet and I know sound like Miracle Hill unfortunately or not. If you can send me a list that would be awesome. I think Thornwell and [E]pworth are. I know SCYAP/DSS was at one time but I'm not sure they are actively licensing new families at this time?"

- 14. On January 24, 2022, at 11:16 am, Amber replied with an email with a new subject line, "LGBTQ friendly Agencies," and wrote, "See list below. Let me know if you still have questions. Epworth: Will work with married LGBTQ families but not cohabitating couples. The Licensing Partners who have no relational or identity restrictions are as follows: Growing Home Southeast, Lutheran Services Carolinas, New Foundations/Connections, Oasis of Hope, SC Mentor, SC Youth Advocate Program, Thornwell, Carolina Therapeutic Services, National Youth Advocate Program."
- 15. I replied at 11:17 am writing, "You're the bestest!' and Amber responded at 11:18 am, "Happy to help!" I did not have further correspondence with Amber on this topic until October 27, 2022, at 7:05 pm, when I wrote, "Hi, did Bair Foundation say anything about their LGBTQ stances/willingness to have LGBTQ foster parents (gay, trans, married LGBTQ, unmarried LGBTQ)? Do you have someone you could ask?" On October 28, 2022, at 9:32 am, Amber replied, "I will see what I can find out!" I have not received any additional information from Amber verbally or in writing. A true and accurate copy of my email exchanges with Amber is attached as **Exhibit 1** to this declaration.
- 16. In October 2022, I was invited by the University of South Carolina School of Law's Court Improvement Project to provide a training to Guardians Ad Litem and Court Appointed Special Advocates about advocacy for LGBTQ youth in foster care in South Carolina. My co-presenter was Currey Cook from Lambda Legal, one of the counsel for the plaintiffs in this case, Eden Rogers and Brandy Welch. Currey and I were not able to speak to each other before the virtual presentation and I did not see his presentation as I had a work conflict. After the presentation Currey reached out to me to compare notes and share impressions about the training and next steps. During our discussion, I relayed the information I have outlined above. I did not share information about my interactions and

communications with DSS about CPAs that will work with LGBTQ people and same-sex couples during my presentation.

November 16, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

David Wood

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EXHIBIT 1



David Wood

LGBTQ friendly Agencies

7 messages

Peeples, Amber To: David Wood

Mon, Jan 24, 2022 at 11:16 AM

See list below. Let me know if you still have questions.

Epworth: Will work with married LGBTQ families but not cohabitating couples

The Licensing Partners who have no relational or identity restrictions are as follows:

Growing Home Southeast

Lutheran Services Carolinas

New Foundations/Connections

Oasis of Hope

SC Mentor

SC Youth Advocate Program

Thornwell

Carolina Therapeutic Services

National Youth Advocate Program

Amber Peeples

Statewide Foster Parent Liaison

SC Department of Social Services

P.O. Box 1520

1535 Confederate Avenue

Columbia, South Carolina 29202



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From: David Wood

Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 9:37 AM

To: Peeples, Amber

Subject: Re: Vaccine and Pool Updates

*** **THIS IS AN EXTERNAL E-MAIL:** Use CAUTION when clicking on links as they could open malicious websites. *** (DLP2)

I can't remember if it was you I was talking to about this but also in the community there recently has come a need to understand which agencies are licensing LGBTQ families at this time. I know some are moving in that direction but not there yet and I know sound like Miracle Hill unfortunately or not. If you can send me a list that would be awesome. I think Thornwell and epworth are. I know SCYAP/DSS was at one time but I'm not sure they are actively licensing new families at this time?

David

On Mon, Jan 24, 2022 at 9:30 AM Peeples, Amber

Good Morning David,

Hope you are doing well. I have attached updated guidelines from DSS. Let me know if there is something else I needed to send you.

wrote:

6:19-cv-01567-JD Date Filed 11/17/22 Entry Number 243-39 Page 10 of 17

Thanks for all you do!

Amber Peeples

Statewide Foster Parent Liaison

SC Department of Social Services

P.O. Box 1520

1535 Confederate Avenue

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David Wood

Pronouns: he, him, his (why this matters)

David Wood

To: "Peeples, Amber"

Mon, Jan 24, 2022 at 11:17 AM

You're the bestest!

6:19-cv-01567-JD Date Filed 11/17/22 Entry Number 243-39 Page 11 of 17

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Thanks for all you do!

Amber Peeples

Statewide Foster Parent Liaison

SC Department of Social Services

P.O. Box 1520

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--

David Wood

Pronouns: he, him, his (why this matters)

Peeples, Amber To: David Wood

Mon, Jan 24, 2022 at 11:18 AM

Happy to help!

Amber Peeples

Statewide Foster Parent Liaison

SC Department of Social Services

P.O. Box 1520

6:19-cv-01567-JD Date Filed 11/17/22 Entry Number 243-39 Page 14 of 17

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Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 11:17 AM

To: Peeples, Amber

Subject: Re: LGBTQ friendly Agencies

*** THIS IS AN EXTERNAL E-MAIL: Use CAUTION when clicking on links as they could open malicious websites. *** (DLP2)

You're the bestest!

On Mon, Jan 24, 2022 at 11:16 AM Peeples, Amber

wrote:

See list below. Let me know if you still have questions.

Epworth: Will work with married LGBTQ families but not cohabitating couples

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The Licensing Partners who have no relational or identity restrictions are as follows:

Growing Home Southeast

Lutheran Services Carolinas

New Foundations/Connections

Oasis of Hope

SC Mentor

SC Youth Advocate Program

Thornwell

Carolina Therapeutic Services

National Youth Advocate Program

Amber Peeples

Statewide Foster Parent Liaison

SC Department of Social Services

P.O. Box 1520

1535 Confederate Avenue

Columbia, South Carolina 29202





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From: David Wood

Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 9:37 AM

To: Peeples, Amber

Subject: Re: Vaccine and Pool Updates

*** THIS IS AN EXTERNAL E-MAIL: Use CAUTION when clicking on links as they could open malicious websites. *** (DLP2)

I can't remember if it was you I was talking to about this but also in the community there recently has come a need to understand which agencies are licensing LGBTQ families at this time. I know some are moving in that direction but not there yet and I know sound like Miracle Hill unfortunately or not. If you can send me a list that would be awesome. I think Thornwell and epworth are. I know SCYAP/DSS was at one time but I'm not sure they are actively licensing new families at this time?

David

On Mon, Jan 24, 2022 at 9:30 AM Peeples, Amber

wrote:

Good Morning David,

Hope you are doing well. I have attached updated guidelines from DSS. Let me know if there is something else I needed to send you.

Thanks for all you do!

Amber Peeples

Statewide Foster Parent Liaison

SC Department of Social Services

P.O. Box 1520

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--

David Wood

Pronouns: he, him, his (why this matters)

David Wood
To: "Peeples, Amber"

Thu, Oct 27, 2022 at 7:05 PM

Hi, did Bair Foundation say anything about their LGBTQ stances/willingness to have LGBTQ foster parents (gay, trans, married LGBTQ, unmarried LGBTQ)? Do you have someone you could ask?

Thanks, David

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wrote:

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