EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 07-26
ESTABLISHIING THE CHILD WELFARE REVIEW COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, our community is grieving the tragic death of ten-year-old Jalayshia ("Malayshia") Alford; and

WHEREAS, at the time of her death, Malayshia was committed to the legal custody of the City of Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS) and was receiving case management services from Catholic Community Services (Community Umbrella Agency #4). The child and foster family were also receiving services from Pennsylvania MENTOR, the certifying foster care agency; and

WHEREAS, Malayshia's foster mother has been charged with her murder and other related charges; and

WHEREAS, as required by Act 33 of 2008, P.L. 276, No. 33, the child's death while in foster care will be subject to an interdisciplinary review; and

WHEREAS, there are over 2,000 children in the Philadelphia foster care system; and

WHEREAS, the City is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all residents, and particularly its young people; and

WHEREAS, the severity of recent events requires a deeper review to strengthen our child welfare system and to prevent child abuse-related fatalities, near fatalities, and injuries involving children and youth in DHS foster care;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CHERELLE L. PARKER, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, by the powers vested in me, do hereby ORDER as follows:

SECTION 1. Child Welfare Review Committee.

There is hereby established a Child Welfare Review Committee which shall serve as an independent advisory board to the Mayor.

The Committee shall be composed of experts and leaders in the field of child welfare and foster care. The Committee shall be tasked with reviewing the system of coordination between DHS, Community Umbrella Agencies (CUA), and local foster care agencies, to prevent child abuse-related fatalities, near fatalities, and injuries involving children and youth in DHS foster care.

SECTION 2. Composition of the Committee.

1. The Committee shall be composed of up to fifteen (15) members, who shall be appointed by the Mayor. The members shall include national experts and leaders in the field of child welfare and foster care, including representatives from:

a) Child advocacy groups;
b) The social work profession;
c) The medical profession;
d) The behavioral health profession;
e) Legal experts in the child welfare and foster care systems; and
f) Such other fields and communities as the Mayor shall deem appropriate.

2. There shall be two Chairs of the Committee, who shall be designated by the Mayor.

SECTION 3. Committee Functions.

1. The Committee shall undertake a comprehensive review of the following matters with respect to the Philadelphia foster care system:

a) The process of placing children in and selecting foster homes;
b) The City and Commonwealth's systems of oversight for foster homes;
c) Licensing of foster homes;
d) Visitation requirements;
e) The City's requirements for contracting with entities to carry out foster care services; and
f) Such other related matters as the Committee deems necessary and appropriate to provide meaningful recommendations on improving child safety within the foster care system.

SECTION 4. Report of the Committee.

1. Within 120 days after convening, the Committee shall submit a report to the Mayor, unless extended by the Mayor for good cause.

2. Among other things, the report shall set forth recommendations for:

a) Improving DHS's oversight of and coordination with CUA and local foster care agencies;

b) Ways that all institutional actors in the Philadelphia foster care system can work towards the elimination of child abuse-related fatalities, near fatalities, and injuries, and better ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children in foster care.

3. The committee shall disband upon the Mayor's acceptance of the Committee's final report.

SECTION 5. City Cooperation.

Consistent with Section 8-401 of The Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, every City department and agency shall take all appropriate action, consistent with applicable law, to assist the Committee in executing its duties, as set forth by this Order.

SECTION 6. Effective Date.

This Order shall take effect immediately.

Date: 11-10-26

Cherelle L. Parker, Mayor