

From: melissa.schilling
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#); [Kimberly De Serpa](#); [Second District](#); [Jamie Sehorn](#); [Manu Koenig](#)
Subject: Thank you + follow up
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 9:28:47 AM
Attachments: [Complaint Ziegenhorn Judicial Commission.pdf](#)
[Complaint Enman State Medical Board.pdf](#)
[Complaint Morris Board of Supervisors.pdf](#)
[addl info Laura Dru Hyams LMFT 48769 No. 2002025001177.pdf](#)
[Complaint Rainey Simoni.pdf](#)

******CAUTION:**This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Public Comment – March 11, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in public comments today.

I appreciate the forum to be heard.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

In regards to the [June 2024 Grand Jury findings](#), developing a Santa Cruz County Oversight Committee is essential. I am submitting additional complaints filed with the appropriate agencies regarding the Department of Social Services. All court filings related to this matter have been completed through Juvenile Court.

As of today, March 11th, I have yet to receive a response from anyone within the Social Services Department regarding these serious concerns.

The June 2024 Grand Jury report highlights systemic failures within Child Protective Services (CPS) and underscores the urgent need for a **Santa Cruz County Oversight Committee** to provide independent accountability. The report found that CPS has **inadequate oversight, a lack of transparency, and insufficient mechanisms for family advocacy**, all of which have been evident in my experience.

1. Negligent STRTP Placement & State Ombudsman Findings

- In October 2024, I filed a complaint with the State Ombudsman regarding a **negligent Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP)**.
- In December 2024, the Ombudsman **validated my allegations**, yet Santa Cruz County Social Services and Judge Ziegenhorn failed to take action to move my son to a safer location.
- A **second State Ombudsman investigation** is currently pending.

2. Unanswered Complaints Against CPS Conduct

- I filed **multiple complaints** with the county regarding the conduct of CPS.
- To my knowledge, **no corrective action** has been taken.

3. Unanswered Civil Rights Complaint & 827 Petition

- I filed a **civil rights complaint**, yet the juvenile court judge has not responded to the **827 petition request** submitted by Santa Cruz County investigator Bernadette Ehrlach.

- She is now **filing a second petition** this week for access to records.

4. Threats to Reunification & Lack of Proper Evaluations

- In August 2024, CPS workers **Emily Simoni and Alli Rainey** explicitly told me that if I did not agree with CPS's plan, **they would pull reunification efforts because "our judge in our court will agree with us. She always does."**
- At the time, I was advocating for a **comprehensive psychoanalytical evaluation** for my son after:
 - **Missing 83 days of school**
 - **Being hospitalized in crisis**
 - **22 law enforcement calls in 28 days** for emergency support
- I believed a thorough evaluation was necessary to fully understand and support my son's needs. CPS **refused**, and from that point forward, our paths diverged.

The Grand Jury report **validates these concerns**, emphasizing the need for **greater oversight, transparency, and accountability** within CPS. The **Board of Supervisors must act** to ensure that families are heard, cases are properly reviewed, and decisions are made in the best interest of children.

I urge you to prioritize the **immediate establishment of an independent oversight committee** to ensure accountability for these ongoing failures.

Melissa Schilling

photo



Together in Education
[REDACTED] | She/Her, Melissa Schilling, M.S., AET

[Cabrillo College](#) | Climate Resilience
[Education Therapist](#) | [Special Education](#)

[REDACTED] | What are you reading? I'm reading:
Tending the Wild by *Kat Anderson*



Land Acknowledgement:

"The land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Awaswas-speaking Uypi Tribe. Today there are no known survivors of the Awaswas Nation. The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, comprised of the descendants of indigenous people taken to missions Santa Cruz and San Juan Bautista during Spanish colonization of the Central Coast, is today working hard to restore traditional stewardship practices on these lands to honor the Awaswas and heal from historical trauma."

Amah Mutsun (Aaa-Ma) (Moot-sun)

Uypi (You-P)

Awaswas (Aaa-Was-Was)



**HUMAN
SERVICES
DEPARTMENT**

County of Santa Cruz
Human Services Department
Family and Children's Services Division

1400 Emeline Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Phone: (831) 454-4222
Fax: (831) 454-4717

500 Westridge Drive
Watsonville, CA 95076
Phone: (831) 763-8850
Fax: (831) 763-8888

COMPLAINT FORM

To: Assistant Division Director, Family and Children's Services
Human Services Department
P.O. Box 1320
Santa Cruz, CA 95061

1. Your Name:
2. Child(ren)'s name(s):
3. Relationship to the Child(ren): Parent or Guardian Caregiver Other _____
4. Subject of Complaint:
 - Placement or removal of a child from a foster home or other substitute caregiver
 - I am a relative or family friend who was not approved as a placement for the child(ren)
 - Other Bias, Inequitable Case Managemtn

Please describe the specific details of the complaint. Please be as specific as possible with dates, places, names of persons involved. Attach additional sheets if needed.

Describe the complaint:
To whom have you spoken about your complaint? When? Alli Rainey, Emily Simoni, Joanna Moody, Paul Vitali, Randy Morris
What suggestions do you have for a resolution that would be satisfactory to you? A new caseworker and case supervisor to conduct a fresh investigation and create a new case plan.

Signature: melissa schilling	Date: 10/27/24
Mailing Address: [REDACTED]	Phone number/s: [REDACTED]

February 26, 2025

Melissa Schilling

██████████

Aptos, CA 95003

(██████████)

To Whom It May Concern,

I am submitting this formal misconduct complaint against Judge Erika Ziegenhorn for her handling of the case involving my son, ██████ and the subsequent failure of the Santa Cruz County Child Protective Services (CPS) and County Social Services to provide adequate care and oversight. Judge Ziegenhorn's repeated rulings have allowed CPS and County Social Services to do the bare minimum in addressing my son's needs, all while siding with these agencies in the face of clear and ongoing violations of his civil rights. Her actions, or lack thereof, have directly contributed to the harm and trauma my son continues to experience, and I believe her decisions reflect a failure to uphold her duty to protect the rights and welfare of vulnerable children.

Timeline of Events:

October 2023 – February 2024:

- October 11, 2023: Aaron Williams, LCSW, submitted a referral to Children's Behavioral Health for my son, ██████. Prior referrals were also made by Ellen Garfield, LCSW. Despite these attempts, CPS and County Social Services, under the direction of Judge Ziegenhorn, did nothing to properly assess or address ██████'s mental health needs in a timely manner.
- December 2023: My family was finally assigned to county health services, but our clinician was unable to meet regularly due to health issues. After requesting a new clinician, Dr. Namjas Enman, the psychiatrist overseeing my son's care, made the decision to discontinue psychotropic medications without conducting an in-person evaluation, relying on inadequate and incomplete information. Judge Ziegenhorn, in her capacity, allowed this

decision to stand, even though it violated standard care protocols and placed my son in danger.

- January – July 2024: Despite a clear and ongoing need for psychiatric care, including an immediate in-person evaluation, Judge Ziegenhorn failed to intervene in the face of the neglect and lack of oversight by Dr. Enman and County Social Services. Social workers Emily Simoni and Alli Rainey improperly removed my son from my care without conducting a full psychological assessment, violating his rights and the professional standards set forth by the California Board of Behavioral Sciences. Judge Ziegenhorn did nothing to stop this unlawful removal or ensure a proper evaluation was conducted.
- July 2024 – February 2025: My son endured two separate 5150 psych holds, each lasting a week, as a direct result of the lack of appropriate care and psychiatric intervention. Judge Ziegenhorn continued to side with CPS and County Social Services, disregarding the mounting evidence of my son's deteriorating mental health and the lack of proper care.

Concerns and Violations:

1. Failure to Protect Civil Rights and Uphold Standards of Care:
Judge Ziegenhorn has allowed CPS and County Social Services to neglect their duty to provide adequate care for my son. Despite clear evidence that my son was not receiving the necessary psychiatric support, Judge Ziegenhorn consistently sided with these agencies, allowing the violations of his rights to continue. By failing to intervene and demand a full psychological evaluation, in-person care, or referral to a qualified psychiatrist, Judge Ziegenhorn failed to fulfill her judicial responsibility to ensure my son's safety and well-being.
2. Dereliction of Duty in Protecting a Vulnerable Child:
My son's removal from my care without a full psychological evaluation, as facilitated by Social Workers Emily Simoni and Alli Rainey, was a direct violation of his rights. Judge Ziegenhorn not only allowed this action but failed to recognize or address the significant harm it caused. She permitted an unlawful removal and failed to demand that proper protocols and evaluations be followed.

3. Failure to Address Ongoing Violations by CPS and County Social Services:
Over the course of several months, my son's mental health worsened due to the lack of appropriate intervention, medication management, and psychiatric care. Despite multiple reports of crisis situations, including two 5150 holds, Judge Ziegenhorn took no meaningful action to address these failures. Her continued support of CPS and County Social Services, despite their evident neglect, suggests a disregard for the rights of children under her watch.
4. Failure to Uphold Legal and Ethical Standards in Child Welfare Cases:
Judge Ziegenhorn's handling of this case reflects a pattern of siding with CPS and County Social Services, even when clear violations of legal and ethical standards have occurred. Her failure to require a thorough investigation, psychological assessment, or appropriate care for my son directly contributed to the ongoing harm he has faced. She allowed these agencies to operate with minimal oversight, effectively ignoring the duty she has as a judge to ensure justice and fairness in child welfare cases.

Call for Immediate Action:

1. Full Investigation into Judge Ziegenhorn's Conduct:
I request a full investigation into Judge Ziegenhorn's conduct in this case. Her repeated failure to intervene and uphold my son's civil rights, despite clear and ongoing violations, calls into question her ability to make impartial and just decisions in child welfare cases. Her actions—or lack thereof—have directly harmed my son, and a thorough review of her handling of this case is necessary.
2. Immediate Remediation of Inadequate Care by CPS and County Social Services:
I demand that my son be immediately referred to an independent, qualified psychiatrist for a comprehensive evaluation and treatment plan. His current condition, exacerbated by the lack of care and oversight, requires urgent intervention. It is essential that CPS and County Social Services be held accountable for their failure to provide appropriate care.
3. Reform in Child Welfare Judicial Oversight:
I call for a review of the practices in Santa Cruz County regarding the

judicial oversight of CPS and Social Services cases. It is critical that judges such as Judge Ziegenhorn be held to the highest standards of accountability when it comes to child welfare. Judicial oversight must be rigorous and proactive, ensuring that vulnerable children are protected and provided with the care and services they need.

Conclusion:

Judge Ziegenhorn's actions in this case have allowed my son to suffer unnecessarily and have violated his civil rights by permitting CPS and County Social Services to operate with minimal oversight. Her failure to intervene, her support of unlawful actions, and her disregard for professional standards have contributed to a continuing crisis in my son's care. I demand accountability for her role in these decisions and a thorough investigation into her conduct.

No child should have to endure the harm my son has suffered. I urge your office to take immediate action to ensure that the rights and welfare of children in Santa Cruz County are protected, and that those who fail in their duty to safeguard these rights are held accountable.

Sincerely,
Melissa Schilling

██████████

March 04, 2025

Melissa Schilling

[REDACTED]

Aptos, CA 95003

[REDACTED]

**Formal Complaint Against Santa Cruz County Social Services Director
Randy Morris**

I am writing to formally complain about the conduct of Randy Morris, Director of Santa Cruz County Social Services, regarding his repeated failure to mediate, communicate, respond, intervene, or effect any meaningful change in a critical mental health case involving my family. From August 2024 through March 2025, as this case has escalated and ultimately imploded, Mr. Morris has never once reached out with compassion, support, or service—despite bi-monthly email correspondence, court filings, and letters to social services employees requesting assistance.

Santa Cruz County Social Services has consistently failed to address the urgent and complex needs of my son, [REDACTED] a foster youth with a well-documented history of early childhood trauma, cognitive impairments, and severe mental health challenges. Despite extensive documentation, including neuropsychological assessments confirming his vulnerabilities, Santa Cruz County Social Services has not implemented appropriate interventions.

Key failures under Mr. Morris' leadership include:

1. Negligent Mental Health Oversight

- Despite clear evidence of Reactive Attachment Disorder, Santa Cruz County Social Services failed to conduct a thorough psychological assessment or ensure trauma-informed care.
- Alameda County social workers, who reviewed this case, immediately recognized the signs of Reactive Attachment Disorder and provided empathy, support, and resources—despite this case not being in their

jurisdiction. In contrast, Santa Cruz County Social Services has remained indifferent and unresponsive.

2. Failure to Provide Crisis Intervention

- [REDACTED] has been placed on two psychiatric holds (5150 and 5185) due to escalating mental health crises. Law enforcement has repeatedly had to intervene due to his destructive behaviors, including setting fires and physically damaging property.
- Santa Cruz County Social Services has not provided any crisis stabilization, despite these repeated incidents.

3. Failure to Communicate and Coordinate Care

- A San Rafael Police officer reported that Santa Cruz County Social Services is unresponsive during crises. When law enforcement is called to [REDACTED] facility, no authorized representative is available to communicate with them.
- The officer stated that I am the only consistent point of contact through 18 visits to the facility, further proving the county's complete lack of oversight.

4. Failure to Ensure Proper Medical Treatment

- Dr. Namjas Enman, a physician overseeing my son's psychiatric care, discontinued his psychotropic medications without in-person evaluation, consultation with prescribing doctors, or a follow-up care plan.
- This reckless decision has contributed to my son's worsening condition and increased psychiatric hospitalizations.

5. Failure to Ensure Supervision and Safety

- [REDACTED] has repeatedly gone AWOL from his STRTP (Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program) and has been involved in unlawful activities, including vehicle theft and property damage.
- Despite clear evidence of safety risks, Santa Cruz County Social Services has taken no steps to ensure proper supervision or placement in a more secure environment.

6. Refusal to Engage in Family Reunification or Meaningful Support

- [REDACTED] has expressed conflicting statements about wanting to return home, yet Santa Cruz County Social Services has made no effort to assess his competency or provide family therapy.

- The agency's refusal to engage in family-based support has only further alienated [REDACTED] and exacerbated his behavioral challenges.

Request for Immediate Action

Due to the continued failure of Santa Cruz County Social Services under the leadership of Randy Morris, I formally request:

1. **A Full Investigation** into the negligence, lack of intervention, and systemic failures of Santa Cruz County Social Services in handling this case.
2. **Immediate Transfer of [REDACTED]' Case** to a county with trauma-informed professionals, such as Santa Clara or Alameda County, where he has already received competent and compassionate engagement.
3. **Accountability for Randy Morris and his Department** for their failure to act in a way that ensures the safety and well-being of a vulnerable foster youth.
4. **A Court-Ordered Psychological Assessment** to formally determine [REDACTED] cognitive capacity, mental health needs, and appropriate placement.

Santa Cruz County Social Services has demonstrated gross incompetence in managing this case, placing my son at further risk. Their continued negligence should not be allowed to persist without consequence. I request urgent action before further harm occurs.

Sincerely,
Melissa Schilling

Sincerely,
Melissa Schilling
[REDACTED]

February 26, 2025

Melissa Schilling

██████████
Aptos, CA 95003
██████████

To Whom It May Concern,

I am submitting this formal complaint regarding the harmful and concerning decisions made by Dr. Namjas Enman, who is responsible for overseeing the mental health treatment of my son, ██████. Dr. Enman's decision to discontinue psychotropic medications for my son, a vulnerable and at-risk foster youth, without proper in-person care, formal evaluation, or consultation with the medical professionals who originally prescribed these medications, is both alarming and unacceptable. This action has directly contributed to my son's worsening condition, resulting in severe consequences that could have been prevented with appropriate oversight and intervention.

Under Dr. Enman's care, my son has now experienced two psych holds under Welfare and Institutions Code 5150, each lasting a week, within a six-month period. These holds are clear indicators that my son is in immediate need of proper psychiatric care and oversight, yet Dr. Enman has failed to take any meaningful steps to address his needs in a professional and responsible manner.

Timeline of Events:

October 2023 – February 2024:

- **October 11, 2023:** Aaron Williams, LCSW, submitted a referral to Children's Behavioral Health for my son. Previous referrals had also been made by Ellen Garfield, LCSW. Despite these referrals, Dr. Enman's team failed to coordinate with previous medical providers to obtain essential background information, clinical data, or treatment history, which could have been pivotal in understanding my son's condition and needs.
- **December 2023:** Despite the referral, my family did not receive timely services, and there was a lack of proactive care planning. No clinical evaluations or assessments were performed to identify the underlying issues affecting my son's mental health, and no plan was made to address his ongoing struggles.
- **January – July 2024:** Dr. Enman made the decision to discontinue my son's psychotropic medications without conducting an in-person evaluation or referring him to an appropriate mental health professional. This action, made in the absence of formal consultation and a thorough assessment, led to significant deterioration in my son's behavior and mental state.

- **July 2024 – February 2025:** During this period, my son experienced two separate psych holds under 5150, each lasting a week, a clear result of the lack of psychiatric intervention and the ill-advised decision to stop his medications. His mental state and behavior have deteriorated markedly under Dr. Enman's oversight, and this lapse in care is a direct cause of his crisis situations.

Violations and Concerns:

1. **Failure to Ensure Proper Psychiatric Care:**

Dr. Enman's decision to discontinue psychotropic medications without formal evaluation, consultation, or referral to a qualified physician is both negligent and irresponsible. At no point was an in-person examination conducted to assess my son's current mental state or needs. Additionally, no communication took place with the medical professionals who had prescribed the medications in the first place, ignoring essential continuity of care.
2. **Failure to Provide Adequate Monitoring and Assessment:**

Since Dr. Enman took charge of my son's care, there has been a lack of ongoing monitoring, psychological evaluation, or meaningful care planning. As a result, my son has not received the necessary psychiatric support that could have mitigated the risks to his health and well-being. The lack of a comprehensive treatment plan has only exacerbated his condition.
3. **Increased Incidents of Crisis and Harm:**

Dr. Enman's failure to properly address my son's psychiatric needs has contributed to him undergoing two 5150 holds within a six-month period, indicating a clear crisis situation. These events are direct consequences of Dr. Enman's poor decision-making regarding his medication and overall care. In addition, the lack of proper treatment and oversight has placed my son at great risk for further psychiatric crises and potential long-term harm.
4. **Negligence in the Duty of Care:**

The failure to assess my son's psychological and emotional state adequately and to provide the necessary interventions has caused significant harm to his mental health. The absence of a structured care plan, psychiatric evaluation, and ongoing communication with prior prescribing physicians is a gross violation of my son's right to appropriate care.

Call for Immediate Action:

1. **Full Investigation into Dr. Enman's Decisions and Actions:**

I request an immediate and thorough investigation into Dr. Enman's decision to discontinue my son's psychotropic medications without a formal evaluation, in-person care, or consultation with previous prescribing medical professionals. Her actions have caused significant harm, and I believe a full review of her professional conduct is necessary to ensure accountability.
2. **Transfer to Appropriate Care Providers:**

My son must be referred to an in-person, qualified psychiatrist immediately to receive a

comprehensive evaluation and a proper treatment plan that includes medication management and necessary psychiatric care. Dr. Enman's failure to act appropriately has placed my son's health and safety in jeopardy.

3. Accountability for Professional Negligence:

I demand that Dr. Enman be held accountable for the negligent decisions made in my son's care. Her failure to provide adequate psychiatric oversight and her disregard for proper medical protocols have resulted in my son experiencing unnecessary trauma, psychiatric instability, and legal entanglements.

Conclusion:

Dr. Enman's actions—or lack thereof—have endangered my son's well-being and caused unnecessary harm to our family. I expect a swift and thorough investigation into her handling of my son's care and demand immediate corrective action to ensure that he receives the appropriate treatment and support moving forward. The disregard for professional standards and the failure to provide in-person care, evaluation, and consultation with prior prescribing physicians is unacceptable and must be addressed without delay.

I trust that your office will give this matter the urgent attention it deserves, as my son's safety, mental health, and future are at serious risk due to these decisions.

Sincerely,
Melissa Schilling

██████████

November 14, 2024

Melissa Schilling

[REDACTED]
Los Gatos, CA 95003

RE: Laura Dru Hyams, LMFT 48769, Complaint No. [REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Schilling:

The Board of Behavioral Sciences (Board) is in receipt of your complaint against the above referenced individual. Before the Board can determine the appropriate course of action, additional information is needed. Please answer and provide the following:

1. Provide a complete copy (filed with the court and signed by the judge) of the current/most recent court documents outlining custody, which includes all attached documents/pages that are part of the court order; do not remove/take out any pages or cover up/black out any information.
2. Was Ms. Hyams was appointed by the court? If yes, submit a copy of the document (filed with the court and signed by the judge) outlining the appointment and responsibilities. If she was hired based on a court order, have you discussed or filed a complaint with the court regarding your concerns? What was the outcome?
3. Provide proof of the therapeutic relationship between you or your child and Ms. Hyams (i.e., billing statement, canceled check, insurance explanation of benefits, copies of letters, e-mails, etc.).
4. Provide the beginning and ending dates of service (month/year to month/year). How many total sessions did your child have?
5. What type of therapeutic services did your child receive from Ms. Hyams (i.e., individual therapy, family therapy, couples therapy, etc.)?
6. What was the reason for treatment? Please explain.
7. In what type of setting are/were the sessions held (i.e., non-profit organization, government agency, educational institution, charitable corporation, or private practice)?
8. Please be more specific regarding your complaint issues with Ms. Hyams. Provide specific dates, details of what occurred, etc.
9. Do you have any evidence (e.g., text, emails, cards, photos, etc.) to support your allegations? If yes, please provide copies.

November 14, 2024
Laura Dru Hyams, LMFT 48769
Complaint No. [REDACTED]
Page 2

10. For Ms. Hyams to provide full disclosure to the Board regarding your complaint, you will need to complete and return the enclosed *Release of Information for Complaints* form for yourself and for your child as his representative. Failure to provide the signed release form will impede the Board's ability to investigate your complaint.
11. If your child is over 12 years old, as that is the age of consent in California, per Health and Safety Code section 124260(b)(1), he will need to sign a Release of Information for Complaints form for himself.
12. Your child's other parent will have to sign a form for him as his representative, since you share custody of your child.

Please provide the full name and mailing address for the other parent with a statement indicating the Board may contact him concerning your complaint; include this with your response to this letter.

Please note: if the other parent is unwilling to sign the release forms, what information, if any, Ms. Hyams can legally discuss with the Board (a third party) may be limited, which may prevent your complaint from being investigated.

13. You may include any other information and/or documentation which you feel will assist the Board in resolving this matter.

Please respond to the Board's request **in writing to the above address** by **December 6, 2024** and include a copy of this letter with your response for proper identification. Be advised that failure to respond by the date given will result in the closure of the complaint.

Sincerely,

Consumer Complaint & Investigations Unit
Board of Behavioral Sciences

Enclosures

From: [melissa schilling](#)
To: [melissa schilling](#)
Cc: [Board Of Supervisors](#); [Kimberly De Serpa](#); [Second District](#); [Jamie Sehorn](#); [Manu Koenig](#)
Subject: Re: Thank you + follow up
Date: Friday, March 14, 2025 8:00:33 AM
Attachments: [Melissa Schilling Letter Sgt. Stefan Fish.docx.pdf](#)

****CAUTION: This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Good Morning,

Following up: Randy Morris, CPS and Social Services in Santa Cruz County.
As of today, March 14th, I have yet to receive a response from anyone within the Social Services Department regarding these serious concerns.

This is my beautiful son for whom I will continue to advocate because he is worth EVERYTHING. Last summer I took him to Florida International University for a 6-week Haitian Kreyol language institute for diaspora. He was thrilled. 6 weeks later, upon leaving the warm embrace of the Haitian community, he had a mental health incident and we lost him to the system.



Attaching a letter from Sgt Fish from the SC Sheriff, a true gem in our community.
The "24-7 Social Services Mobile Crisis Unit" never responded to a single incident at our home.
22 behavioral episodes in 28 days. 22 unanswered phone calls to social services.
However Sgt Fish and his team would come over and provide support, guidance and help.
Bless.

As of Friday, March 14th I still have not heard from anyone in Social Services since my son was committed to a second psych hold by Marin County police on February 27th. I have no idea where he is or his current status -- whether he is dead or alive. What a feeling for a parent to experience.

Please help me.
Melissa Schilling



Together in Education

[melissaschilling.com](#) She/Her, Melissa Schilling, M.S., AET

[Cabrillo College](#) | Climate Resilience

[Education Therapist](#) | [Special Education](#)

[What are you reading?](#) I'm reading:

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Land Acknowledgement:

"The land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Awaswas-speaking Uypi Tribe. Today there are no known survivors of the Awaswas Nation. The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, comprised of the descendants of indigenous people taken to missions Santa Cruz and San Juan Bautista during Spanish colonization of the Central Coast, is today working hard to restore traditional stewardship practices on these lands to honor the Awaswas and heal from historical trauma."

Amah Mutsun (Aaa-Ma) (Moot-sun)

Uypi (You-P)

Awaswas (Aaa-Was-Was)

On Tue, Mar 11, 2025 at 9:28 AM melissa schilling <[melissaschilling.com](#)> wrote:

Public Comment – March 11, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in public comments today.

I appreciate the forum to be heard.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

In regards to the [June 2024 Grand Jury findings](#), developing a Santa Cruz County Oversight Committee is essential. I am submitting additional complaints filed with the appropriate agencies regarding the Department of Social Services. All court filings related to this matter have been completed through Juvenile Court.

As of today, March 11th, I have yet to receive a response from anyone within the Social Services Department regarding these serious concerns.

The June 2024 Grand Jury report highlights systemic failures within Child Protective Services (CPS) and underscores the urgent need for a **Santa Cruz County Oversight Committee** to provide independent accountability. The report found that CPS has **inadequate oversight, a lack of transparency, and insufficient mechanisms for family advocacy**, all of which have been evident in my experience.

1. Negligent STRTP Placement & State Ombudsman Findings

- In October 2024, I filed a complaint with the State Ombudsman regarding a **negligent Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP)**.
- In December 2024, the Ombudsman **validated my allegations**, yet Santa Cruz County Social Services and Judge Ziegenhorn failed to take action to move my son to a safer location.
- A **second State Ombudsman investigation** is currently pending.

2. Unanswered Complaints Against CPS Conduct

- I filed **multiple complaints** with the county regarding the conduct of CPS.
- To my knowledge, **no corrective action** has been taken.

3. Unanswered Civil Rights Complaint & 827 Petition

- I filed a **civil rights complaint**, yet the juvenile court judge has not responded to the **827 petition request** submitted by Santa Cruz County investigator Bernadette Ehrlach.
- She is now **filing a second petition** this week for access to records.

4. Threats to Reunification & Lack of Proper Evaluations

- In August 2024, CPS workers **Emily Simoni and Alli Rainey** explicitly told me that if I did not agree with CPS's plan, **they would pull reunification efforts because "our judge in our court will agree with us. She always does."**
- At the time, I was advocating for a **comprehensive psychoanalytical evaluation** for my son after:
 - **Missing 83 days of school**
 - **Being hospitalized in crisis**
 - **22 law enforcement calls in 28 days** for emergency support
- I believed a thorough evaluation was necessary to fully understand and support my son's needs. CPS **refused**, and from that point forward, our paths diverged.

The Grand Jury report **validates these concerns**, emphasizing the need for **greater oversight, transparency, and accountability** within CPS. The **Board of Supervisors must act** to ensure that families are heard, cases are properly reviewed, and decisions are made in the best interest of children.

I urge you to prioritize the **immediate establishment of an independent oversight committee** to ensure accountability for these ongoing failures.

Melissa Schilling

photo



Together in Education

melissaschilling.com | She/Her, Melissa Schilling, M.S., AET

[Cabrillo College](#) | [Climate Resilience](#)

[Education Therapist](#) | [Special Education](#)

melissa@melissaschilling.com | What are you reading? I'm reading:

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Amah Mutsun (Aaa-Ma) (Moot-sun)

Uypi (You-P)

Awaswas (Aaa-Was-Was)



County of Santa Cruz

Sheriff-Coroner

5200 Soquel Ave. Santa Cruz CA, 95062
831-454-7600

October 22nd, 2024

To whom it may concern,

This letter is intended to provide a summary of responses and observations by the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office to the residence of Melissa "Mimi" Schilling and her adopted son [REDACTED], [REDACTED] Aptos, Ca. 95003.

In summary, since January of 2024 the Sheriff's Office has responded approximately 15 times. I was present during 3-4 of these responses and had extensive interactions with both Melissa and Roobens.

On each occasion I saw the struggle that Melissa was challenged with in balancing a healthy, productive life for [REDACTED] with the need to ensure his safety. I observed Melissa carefully weighed what was best each individual time for [REDACTED] even if it was a hardship for herself.

I was specifically impressed with the various services and options she had secured in her challenges to keep [REDACTED] engaged and safe.

Overall I feel that Melissa had a healthy home, strong plan for [REDACTED] care and with the right support could provide adequately for [REDACTED] in the home.

Please don't hesitate to reach out for any clarification or further details regarding the Sheriff's Office observations in the Schilling home.

Sincerely,

Sergeant Stefan Fish

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