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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### NEVADA RECEIVES HIGH GRADE FOR PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION RELATING TO CHILD FATALITIES

**Carson City**—Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Director Mike Willden and Division of Child and Family Services Administrator Fernando Serrano announced today that Nevada received a “A” grade as part of a national evaluation of public disclosure policies regarding child fatalities and near fatalities caused by abuse or neglect. Nevada was one of only six states—California, Indiana, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Oregon—to receive an “A,” while ten states received an “F.”

The survey was conducted by The Children’s Advocacy Institute ([www.caichildlaw.org](http://www.caichildlaw.org)) and First Star ([www.firststar.org](http://www.firststar.org)), two nonpartisan organizations that work to improve the status and well-being of children in our society by representing their interests and right to a safe, healthy childhood.

Nevada’s report card, available at [http://www.firststar.org/documents/State\\_Secrecy\\_Report.pdf](http://www.firststar.org/documents/State_Secrecy_Report.pdf), reflects high marks for:

- Public disclosure of findings or information about child abuse or neglect which resulted in a child fatality or near fatality.
- State policy being codified in statute.
- Ease of access to information about child fatalities or near fatalities

“In partnership with the Governor’s Office, State Legislature, county child welfare agencies, and children’s advocates, we have made substantial progress in this area over the past few years,” Willden said. “During the 2007 legislative session, significant additions and modifications were adopted which provide greater accountability and accessibility of information relating to these areas. Many of these enhancements came as a result of the work of Nevada’s Blue Ribbon Panel for the Review of Child Deaths, which submitted an extensive plan for corrective action to the State in January 2007.”

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Assembly Bill 261 (<http://leg.state.nv.us/74th/Reports/history.cfm?ID=583>), passed and signed into law during the 2007 session, made changes concerning the release of certain information to the general public relating to a missing child under the care of the state or a county child welfare services agency who is the subject of an investigation of child abuse or neglect. The same release of certain information pertains to a child under the care of the state or a county child welfare services agency who is the subject of an investigation of child abuse or neglect which results in a fatality or a near fatality.

To view the Blue Ribbon Panel for the Review of Child Deaths report, go to [http://www.dcf.state.nv.us/ChildFatalities/BlueRibbon/Blue\\_Ribbon\\_Panel\\_Report.pdf](http://www.dcf.state.nv.us/ChildFatalities/BlueRibbon/Blue_Ribbon_Panel_Report.pdf).

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