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**Acting Chairman Erik Paulsen (R-MN)  
Subcommittee on Human Resources  
Hearing on Proposal to Reduce Child Deaths Due to Maltreatment**

December 12, 2012  
(Remarks as Prepared)

The purpose of our hearing today is to discuss a proposal designed to reduce the number of children who die from abuse and neglect.

I would like to thank our colleague Mr. Doggett as well as Chairman Camp for their work on the important proposal we will consider today.

There are tragically too many examples, like Devin Drake, of why this is an important issue.

Three-year-old Devin Drake was brought to Mercy Hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota by his mother, Elizabeth Moorman, on August 30, 2011. She said that Devin had been completely normal until he collapsed at home just a few minutes earlier.

After questioning by medical staff...and later police...her boyfriend, Anthony Urban, admitted to punching Devin the day before. He said the boy then fell off a stool and hit his head on the bathroom's ceramic floor.

Even though Devin had trouble standing up and was obviously seriously injured, neither his mother nor her boyfriend took him to the hospital.

The next day, even after Devin's condition worsened, they still did not get help for him. Finally, that evening Devin's mom took him to the hospital.

Police reports revealed this was not the first time Devin suffered abuse.

Before his birth, Devin's mother was convicted on drug charges. After Devin was born, social workers contacted his mother because of alleged drug use. At the time of Devin's hospital visit, his mother had outstanding warrants for her arrest, which no doubt contributed to her reluctance to take her son to the hospital.

Her boyfriend had two felony drug convictions. Neighbors said they noticed Devin recently had a black eye. One neighbor said she had planned to go to authorities the day Devin was taken to the hospital.

When Devin arrived at the hospital, medical staff realized his injuries were no accident. He was diagnosed with severe head trauma... punctured lungs...and a number of contusions. He was airlifted to the Hennepin County Medical Center, where his injuries were found to be consistent with severe abuse.

Four days later, three-year-old Devin Drake died.

Nothing is more heartbreaking than when a child like Devin dies at the hands of someone who should have cared for him most.

That's why we're here today, to review a proposal designed to reduce the number of these tragedies.

Ultimately, the real solutions will come through the incredible work done by local child welfare agencies, education providers, police, health care workers, and many others.

While it won't be the Federal government that solves this problem, we have a role to play. As the legislation before us suggests, we can bring together experts to review which of today's practices work and don't work, to highlight what additional steps hold the most promise, and ultimately to help local officials incorporate that knowledge into their best practices.

In July 2011, we heard about the magnitude of this problem, including the fact that hundreds of child abuse deaths go unreported each year. Today we will review a bipartisan proposal to establish a commission to consider these issues and develop recommendations to ultimately reduce the number of those deaths.

This legislation would have a very small cost, which we would make sure is fully paid for by other savings. We believe it can move forward quickly through the House and hopefully the Senate. Most importantly, we think it will help prevent future child abuse deaths. While that will come too late for Devin, we owe it to the many vulnerable children who might be saved in the years ahead to make any progress we can.

I look forward to all of today's testimony, and advancing that bipartisan legislation authored by Chairman Camp and Representative Doggett.

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