

[Your full name]

[Your mailing address]

[City, State, ZIP]

[Email address]

[Date]

To: Governor Mike DeWine

Riffe Center, 30th Floor; [77 S. High Street](#);

[Columbus, OH 43215](#) Email: Use the Governor's  
contact form

To: Mayor Andrew J. Ginther

City Hall, 2nd Floor; [90 W. Broad Street](#);

[Columbus, OH 43215](#) Email:

[officeofthemayor@columbus.gov](mailto:officeofthemayor@columbus.gov)

To: Franklin County Board of Commissioners

[373 S. High Street](#), 26th Floor; [Columbus, OH](#)

43215-6314 Email:

AnnieRyznar@franklincountyohio.gov for John O'Grady;

chelsea.barnett@franklincountyohio.gov for Kevin Boyce; and

Dayla.Murphy@FranklinCountyOhio.gov for Erica Crawley

To: Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney's Office 373 S. High Street, 14th Floor; Columbus, OH 43215. Email: prosecutor@franklincountyohio.gov

To: Ohio Youth and Family Ombudsmen Office  
P.O. Box 182133; Columbus, OH 43218

Email: Submit through FamilyOmbudsman.ohio.gov, or call 1-877-649-6884

To: Ohio Job & Family Services, Bureau of Civil Rights

[30 E. Broad Street](#), 30th Floor; [Columbus, OH 43215-3414](#)

Email: [Civil\\_Rights@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Civil_Rights@jfs.ohio.gov)

Re: Urgent request for independent review of the case of Mahad Haji and his family

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing to request an urgent, independent review of the medical evidence, child-welfare proceedings, and treatment of Mahad Haji and his family before any irreversible decision is made concerning permanent custody. The family's account describes a medically fragile child separated from his Somali parents,

including his mother, Deqa, who is a nurse. It raises serious concerns about access to medical records, language assistance, procedural fairness, and the evidence being used to justify continued separation and the pursuit of permanent custody.

A central concern is that, according to the family, Deqa has been unable to obtain even her complete labor-and-delivery records, much less Mahad's complete medical records. How can parents meaningfully respond to medical allegations when they cannot obtain the underlying documentation for examination by their attorneys and independent medical experts? An independent review must address this lack of access, not merely repeat conclusions reached without the family having a meaningful opportunity to examine and challenge their basis.

The family also reports that they were cleared

of wrongdoing, yet the state continues to pursue permanent custody. I ask that an independent reviewer establish precisely what the courts have decided, which allegations were dismissed or otherwise resolved, and what current evidence is being offered to support permanent separation. Any distinction between findings in different proceedings should be clearly explained rather than leaving the family to confront unresolved or previously rejected allegations.

I am particularly concerned about the reported circumstances surrounding the father's Alford plea. According to the account brought to my attention, he appeared expecting a hearing but instead faced a trial without an interpreter or adequate support and was pressured into entering the plea. These are serious allegations requiring examination of the notices, transcripts, recordings, interpreter records, and

legal representation provided. The review should determine whether he understood the proceedings and the plea, whether it was knowing and voluntary, and how it has subsequently been used in decisions affecting his parental rights.

I recognize that the family's public account is not a substitute for the complete record. That is precisely why I am requesting an impartial investigation rather than asking your office simply to accept either the family's allegations or the agencies' conclusions.

Please take the following steps within your lawful authority, or promptly refer these requests to an appropriate independent body:

Arrange an independent review. Select qualified reviewers who were not involved in the original investigation, prosecution, or disputed decisions, and identify and address any conflicts of interest.

Investigate the missing medical records.

Determine what Deqa and the family's authorized representatives requested, when they requested it, what was provided, and what remains outstanding. Distinguish requests for Deqa's own records from requests for Mahad's records. Obtain a written explanation and the specific legal basis for any withholding or restriction.

Secure a complete, independent medical assessment. Preserve and collect the relevant maternal, labor-and-delivery, birth, neonatal, and subsequent pediatric records, including underlying imaging, laboratory results, nursing documentation, and specialist assessments where maintained. Facilitate lawful access for the family and its authorized representatives. Independent specialists should examine the underlying records—not merely prior summaries—and evaluate whether Mahad's medical

conditions or treatment explain findings attributed to parental wrongdoing.

Review language access and procedural fairness. Determine whether the parents received qualified interpretation, understandable notice, adequate legal assistance, and a meaningful opportunity to participate. Examine the circumstances of the father's plea and any reliance on it in the custody proceedings.

Examine possible bias. Assess whether language barriers, national-origin bias, cultural misunderstandings, or unsupported assumptions affected the investigation, credibility assessments, services offered, or custody recommendations.

Seek appropriate safeguards before irreversible action. Within lawful authority, seek to prevent irreversible termination of parental rights while these substantial concerns receive prompt

review, without compromising Mahad's immediate safety or necessary medical care. Examine whether medically appropriate services, family contact, and a supported reunification plan could safely preserve his relationship with his parents and siblings. Please also ensure that all relevant medical, agency, and court records are preserved. I understand that your office may not have authority to change a court order and that confidentiality may limit public disclosure. I am not requesting improper interference with the judiciary or public release of a child's private medical information. I am requesting accountable oversight, appropriate referrals, and a transparent explanation of what your office can do to ensure that this family receives a fair, evidence-based process.

Protecting Mahad's health and treating his parents fairly are not competing obligations. A

medically fragile child deserves appropriate care, and his parents deserve a meaningful opportunity to understand and respond to the evidence before their family is permanently separated.

Please acknowledge receipt and provide a written response identifying the action your office will take, any referral made, and the office responsible for follow-up. Given the potential for irreversible consequences, I respectfully request a response within 30 days, or sooner if a permanent-custody hearing or other consequential deadline is imminent.

Sincerely,

Concerned Citizen