

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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March 16, 2022

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Abbott,

This letter provides a summary of the initial findings of our investigation into reports of sex trafficking at The Refuge, a shelter in Bastrop County contracted by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). There is no evidence that any of the residents at the Refuge shelter have ever been sexually abused or trafficked while at the shelter.

A review of the March 10, 2022 DFPS letter to the federal court monitor identified material inaccuracies and contained information that had not been properly verified. A team of Texas Rangers conducted interviews of Refuge shelter residents, shelter employees and DFPS employees. All related allegations, Office of Inspector General investigative reports and internal DFPS files were reviewed and follow up discussions were conducted with the Bastrop County Sheriff's Office (BCSO). There were allegations of two major incidents of employee misconduct at the Refuge shelter.

The first was reported on January 24, 2022 and involved a female Refuge shelter employee who obtained nude photographs of two girls for the alleged purpose of selling them for cash and/or drugs. The Refuge terminated the employee and reported the incident to DFPS and the BCSO. No arrest has been made at this time and the criminal investigation of the former employee continues by the BCSO.

The second incident occurred on February 20, 2022 when two of the residents fled the facility. The Refuge shelter received an allegation that Refuge employees facilitated the escape from the facility. This was reported to DFPS and the BCSO and four Refuge shelter employees were terminated. The BCSO is conducting a criminal investigation on these former employees, and one has been arrested for making a false statement to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. There were no allegations or evidence that these residents were sexually abused or assaulted by anyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steven C. McCraw".

Steven C. McCraw
Colonel/Director