



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



MAURA D. CORRIGAN
DIRECTOR

November 1, 2011



Stephanie Schmitt
Freedom from Religion Foundation
P.O. Box 750
Madison, WI 53701

Ms. Schmitt:

I write in response to your letter dated October 25, 2011 regarding my administering an oath to Department of Human Services (DHS) employees. As you note, MCL 15.151 requires state employees to take an oath or affirmation as a condition of their employment. I find that our staff enthusiastically supports the practice of administering the oath of office. It is an excellent reminder of the role that DHS employees serve on behalf of Michigan's vulnerable children and families.

In administering the oath, I in no way intended to require DHS employees to pass a religious test as part of their employment or to embarrass employees who choose not to say "so help me God." However, to better meet the needs of all DHS employees, I have changed my practice to ask staff to affirm or swear. Further, I also now advise staff that they are welcome to omit the words "so help me God." That language is entirely optional.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Sincerely,


Maura D. Corrigan

cc: Rebekah Visconti