

The Florida Department of Administration

DIVISION OF STATE PLANNING

530 CARLTON BUILDING, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32304 - TELEPHONE (904) 488-6601

BUREAU OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING & ASSISTANCE



R. G. Whittle, Jr.
STATE PLANNING DIRECTOR

Reubin O'D. Askew
GOVERNOR

Wallace W. Henderson
SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION

March 24, 1978

Mr. James E. Hartz, Director
Straight, Inc.
5000 Park Street North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33709

Dear Mr. Hartz:

Re: 76-A4-13-EB01; Project Straight, Inc.; Suspension of Funding

Pursuant to your request of March 23, 1978 to Dr. John H. Dale, Jr., I am herein setting forth the authority and rationale involved in the temporary suspension of LEAA funding to your agency.

The general authority to reject, suspend and revoke applications and grants is contained in Part F, Sec. 501-510 of Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended by the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-644).

Additional authority may be found in the United States Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration Guideline Manual M/100.1A, Change 3, Financial Management for Planning and Action Grants, Ch. 1, par. 4, and Ch. 3, par. 3(c).

In addition, the Florida Administration Manual for Subgrant Awards, Sec. 3.01.07, also advises subgrantees of the possibility of suspension.

Specific authority to suspend funding is also contained in Standard Subgrant Condition 5., Termination of Aid, signed by the subgrantee as a formal part of the subgrant award.

Additional Federal and State statutory authority, rules, and regulations that are applicable will also be provided to you if you so desire.

The decision to temporarily suspend funding to your project was not made capriciously, but only after a serious review of the alleged situation.

If there are major improprieties, and I emphasize again the "if," then it is possible that a total recovery of LEAA funds and state buy-in would be in order. The less money forwarded to your agency means the less money involved in

Mr. James E. Hartz
March 24, 1978
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recovery proceedings. In addition, only a relatively small sum remains to be drawn down by your agency and the subgrant award expires in a few weeks. After expiration of a subgrant award, your agency would only be required to maintain financial records for three years. Programmatic concerns could probably not be raised after the expiration of the project.

This continuing review of your project stems primarily from four sources, not in order of significance:

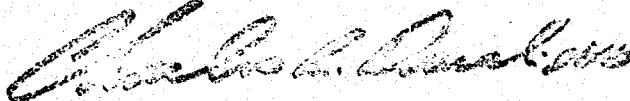
1. Newspaper articles by Mr. William Nottingham, St. Petersburg Times;
2. A written complaint by Mr. George A. Stevenson to Governor Reubin Askew;
3. Specific time-based programmatic modifications required by the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services; and
4. Unresolved questions identified in an on-site monitoring by the Bureau and involving (a) alleged nepotism and (b) minority representation among clients and staff.

I would like to clearly state that we do not have, at this time, any evidence indicating any violation of Florida law, nor do we have any evidence clearly substantiating any violation of LEAA rules and regulations or standard subgrant conditions. What we have are unsubstantiated allegations and some legitimate questions coupled with an unfortunate time period.

The Bureau of Criminal Justice Planning and Assistance is eager to resolve all of the pertinent matters of concern so that the very important services provided by your project can continue on uninterrupted, and not under any continuing cloud of suspicion.

It is my complete expectation that all of these items will be resolved satisfactorily by the end of this month.

Sincerely,



Charles R. Davoli
Bureau Chief

CRD/JHD/mvs

cc: Mr. Frank Griffin, Pinellas NPU
Mr. J. B. Holley, District 5, DHS
✓ Ms. Chris English, Office of the Governor
Control: 76-74-13-8801

R.D. 4, Box 350
Georgetown, Delaware 19947
March 11, 1978

The Honorable Reubin Askew
Governor, State of Florida
Tallahassee, Florida

Dear Governor Askew:

Upon learning that two of my daughters, Gail and Kathy, ages 18 and 16, had been committed to the program known as Straight, Inc. by their mother and stepfather, I began attempts to determine what problem, if any, my daughters had, and whether Straight, Inc. offered satisfactory treatment.

Articles relating to Straight, Inc. were forwarded to me by the St. Petersburg Times at my request. These articles offered sworn statements from former counselors, HRS investigations, etc., as can be seen from the enclosed photocopies. My concern for the welfare of my daughters was greatly increased after reading these articles.

At the same time I requested these articles from the St. Petersburg Times, I wrote to the director of Straight, Inc., Mr. William Hartz, setting forth questions regarding the program. I asked that the program be explained to me--for instance, why parents could not see their child except in the presence of others, why they could not receive or send mail, etc. To date I have not had the courtesy of a reply.

Gail tried to run away twice, the last time being around February 3, 1978. Another daughter of mine, Brenda, age 19, was finally allowed to talk with her sister because she (Brenda) was "stirring up too much trouble." Brenda, being very close to her sister, feels as I do--this program is no place for either Kathy or Gail. She felt that Gail, in just three short weeks, did not sound like herself, almost like she had been programmed, like she had been brainwashed. I might add that Brenda was allowed to see Gail only with her mother and stepfather present, the director, Mr. Hartz, and the whole conversation was recorded.

On March 4, 1978, I called Straight, Inc. and spoke with an Ed Drizzle, explained that I was calling long distance, that two of my daughters were in the program and that I would like to speak with them. In the event they were not there at that time, I asked that the girls be allowed to return my call. He was one of the rudest people I have ever talked with--rude to the point of hanging up on me. If this is the type of people Straight, Inc. has for counselors, it only tends to confirm my fears that Straight, Inc. is not a place I want my daughters in.

It is my belief that the tactics used by Straight, Inc. are damaging. The problem my girls experienced should have been handled at home through love and understanding. I strongly disagree with a program that uses

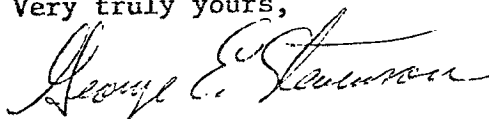
The Honorable Reubin Askew
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March 11, 1978

"'time out,' known by some clients as solitary confinement, 'running,' where juveniles are exercised--forcibly if necessary, and 'marathon sessions' known to some clients as 'come downs' where a group of counselors will yell remarks designed to provoke the client into feeling guilty" (quoted from the St. Petersburg Times, Sunday, December 4, 1977).

I would urge that an investigation be conducted into the program offered by Straight, Inc. Not only am I concerned with the program offered, but the fact that my daughter, Gail, was to graduate from school this spring and cannot now do so since no schooling is offered by Straight, Inc. I do not feel her problem warrants such drastic action as has been taken. She is being denied her education and I can't help but wonder what her mental attitude toward life will be after being in the Straight, Inc. program.

Your consideration in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,



George E. Stevenson

cc: C.B.S.--60 Minutes
Robert G. Marshall, Director
Health & Rehabilitative Services
Mr. William Nottingham, Staff Writer
St. Petersburg Times
Secretary of Health, Education & Welfare
Attention: Ms. Backus
John H. Dale, Jr., Assistant Chief
Bureau of Criminal Justice Planning & Assistance
Director, National Institute of Drug Abuse

The Florida Department of Administration



DIVISION OF STATE PLANNING 530 CARLTON BUILDING, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32304 - TELEPHONE (904) 488-6001 BUREAU OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING & ASSISTANCE

Reubin O'D. Askew
GOVERNOR

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SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION

R. G. Whittle, Jr.
STATE PLANNING DIRECTOR

March 20, 1978

Mr. George E. Stevenson
R.D. 4, Box 350
Georgetown, Delaware 19947

Dear Mr. Stevenson:

Thank you for copying Dr. John H. Dale, Jr. with your letter of March 11, 1978, to Governor Reubin Askew.

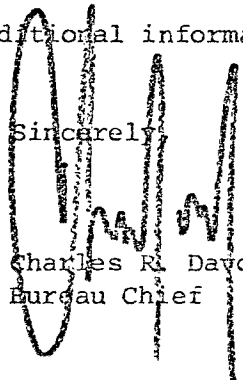
The Bureau of Criminal Justice Planning and Assistance is conducting both a financial and programmatic assessment of "Straight, Inc."

A report will be issued in the next few weeks outlining all of our findings. A copy of this report will be made available to the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, which is responsible for licensing all drug abuse treatment programs within the State.

Any indication of serious impropriety or possible illegal activity would, as a matter of standard procedure, be turned over to the proper local law enforcement officials. This is not to imply that any such situation is, in fact, evident at this time.

If I can provide you with any additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,


Charles R. Davoli
Bureau Chief

CRD/JHD/mvs

cc: Ms. Chris English, Office of the Governor ✓
Mr. Harry Moffett, DHRS - Drug Abuse
Mr. Frank Griffin, Director, Pinellas MPU
Mr. James E. Hartz, Project Straight, Inc.
Control: 76-A4-13-EB01

STRAIGHT, INC.

JAMES E. HARTZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

(A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION)

POST OFFICE BOX 40052
St. Petersburg, Florida 33743
Phone: (813)541-6666

May 2, 1978

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Mr. George Stevenson
R. D. 4, Box 350
Georgetown, Delaware 19947

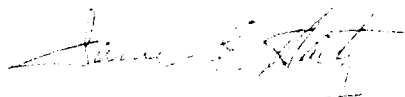
Dear Mr. Stevenson:

I am in receipt of your personal handwritten letter and your letter to Governor Askew. I can appreciate your concern for the future of your daughters. Enclosed please find a brochure which will describe the program in a little more detail. Also enclosed for your review is the recent evaluation of our program by an independent professional in the field. This evaluation is required by our small L.E.A.A. grant.

We certainly want you to feel free to journey to St. Petersburg and see the program in action for yourself. We would be glad to have you. After reviewing many of the more traditional therapeutic modalities that deal with this problem, I can only say that this is the most exciting, positive and successful therapeutic system I have observed. Should you not be able to come to Florida, I would be glad to talk with you by phone. I feel a phone conversation can not give the information that an on-site visit would, but I will try to explain any questions you may have if you can not visit.

Thank you for your concern.

Sincerely,



James E. Hartz
Executive Director
STRAIGHT, INC.

JEH:mga

cc: Governor R. Askew
Dr. John Dale