



TENNESSEE JUSTICE CENTER

Advocates for Families in Need

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Dear Friends of the Tennessee Justice Center:

Every day TJC helps vulnerable Tennessee families through crises in their lives. For example, Christine's dad recently called TJC, upset that a clinic had turned Christine away because she had no health insurance. Only then did the family learn that Christine, an adorable ten-year old with autism and lots of health care needs, had been cut from TennCare. Such bureaucratic mistakes are all too common and can easily upend lives that are already filled with pain and difficulty. TJC contacted the state and got Christine's coverage reinstated. We also pinpointed for officials the systemic glitch that had cost Christine and many other children their coverage.

TJC's work **focuses on the big picture**. TJC's mission is to identify and tackle, as we did in Christine's case, the systemic problems that create crises for low-income families across Tennessee.

TJC's work also represents a **long term investment in Tennessee's future**. For example, we just began a costly month long trial in the *John B.* case. In *John B.*, we are seeking to enforce federal laws for children enrolled in TennCare. At stake are health and mental health services for 750,000 children, a third of Tennessee's kids. What's more, it's the *most vulnerable* third, including children like Christine, for whom the right services at the right time can make a vital, sometimes life-changing, difference. These are children who are at risk because they are growing up in or near poverty, are in foster care, are medically fragile or have serious mental health needs.

The trial is the culmination of efforts that began fifteen years ago, shortly after Michele Johnson helped found TJC. She negotiated a set of reforms with state officials, and the federal court adopted those reforms in a consent decree. The decree was designed to hold TennCare's HMO contractors accountable, ensuring that the contracted agencies provide children the care they need.

The decree has been responsible for significant reforms over the years, and it helped protect children from the devastating TennCare cuts that occurred in 2005-2006. But the state has still not lived up to its commitments. TennCare continues to prepay its HMO contractors billions annually, without effectively requiring the contractors to meet federal standards. TennCare children continue to go without needed care, at tragic personal cost to them and with dire long term consequences for our state.

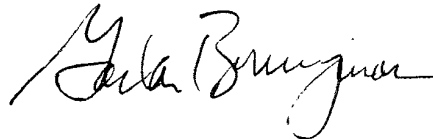
TJC's vision for *John B.* has always been informed by a belief that compliance can lift TennCare above mediocrity and help move the wellbeing of Tennessee's children out of the bottom rank of states. With the generous help of national experts, we are presenting trial testimony that outlines for the court how, by applying proven techniques of health care quality improvement, the state can meet the federal standards while reducing its long term costs. Our experts' recommendations, if adopted by the court, can ensure that children don't suffer without needed care. **We believe that the right intervention in a child's life will improve not only her life but the lives of her children, and theirs.** We trust that our efforts in *John B.* may well have an effect for many decades after we are gone.

For all the pressures and challenges that *John B.* brings, we are deeply grateful for the privilege of working on this case. It is an opportunity made possible by the generosity of so many. Parents who are intimidated by federal court and fearful that speaking out might put their children in jeopardy have summoned the courage to testify so that other families will not have to go through what they have endured. Physicians have volunteered hundreds of hours to prepare expert reports and offer testimony, ignoring colleagues' warnings that doing so could damage their medical practices. Juvenile judges and youth services officers are testifying because, in the words of one, "someone has to take up for these children." Retired state officials have come forward to describe the bureaucratic and political obstacles that frustrated their reform efforts and that make court intervention imperative. Gifted colleagues at the international law firms of SNR Denton and Kirkland & Ellis have donated over \$8 million in *pro bono* legal services to bring to trial a case that has long since become too complex and costly for TJC to handle alone. TJC is buoyed by the prayers of congregations and friends who understand what is at stake. The outpouring of such generous compassion, prompted by a shared vision of a more just and nurturing community for Tennessee's children, is inspiring beyond words.

With your help, we will continue fighting, not just for these children, but for vulnerable Tennesseans of all ages. TJC will continue to make a difference in their lives, in big ways and small. But we need your help now, more than ever. Please **consider joining the Justice League**, a group of dedicated donors who make a substantial gift this year, and pledge to do so for the following two years as well. You may signify your commitment to stand with us, and with the children of Tennessee, by filling out the enclosed donate card. **Please donate as generously as you are able.** We promise to use your dollars wisely, doing the *most* good, for the *biggest* number, who are *least* able to do for themselves.

It is you whose contributions make all of these life- and community-enhancing efforts possible. *Thank you* so much for partnering with TJC in this vital work.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon Bonnyman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping tail.

Gordon Bonnyman