



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 2/3/2022

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Gen Justice Demands Establishment of Independent Investigative Unit to Review Every Child Abuse Fatality and Near Fatality

69% of children who were abused to death in Arizona were known to authorities.

Phoenix, Ariz. – Gen Justice, a national leader fighting for the lives of abused and abandoned children, advocates that every child abuse fatality and near fatality be examined by an independent investigative unit.

The unspeakable abuse and [murder of 11-year-old Chaskah Davis Smith](#) by his grandmother and her husband was preventable. Chaskah and his brother were tortured for years. While the Department of Child Services investigated the family at least three times, the children were not removed nor given follow up support.

According to the 2021 Child Fatality Report, 69 percent of children who were abused to death in Arizona were known to authorities. It is estimated that roughly half of all children abused to death across country are missed by investigating authorities.

Gen Justice is calling for the establishment of an independent investigative unit to review every child abuse fatality and near fatality. When an airplane crashes, the National Highway Transportation Safety Board investigates leaving no stone unturned. Based on their investigation, the board makes recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents. Children whose lives depend on the actions of the Department of Child Services deserve no less.

“The system designed to protect children like Chaskah and his brother clearly failed. The death of Chaskah Smith in Arizona is the Gabriel Fernandez story in California and the Zaiden Jovanovich story in Kansas and so many thousands more,” said Darcy Olsen, CEO. “Lawmakers in all states should commit to establishing an independent investigative unit that will allow for uncovering failures and breakdowns as quickly and accurately as possible to prevent ongoing torture and future murders.”

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About Gen Justice: Gen Justice is an award-winning, charitable organization fighting to mend the broken child protection system through nonpartisan policy changes and a pro bono Children's Law Clinic. To learn more about Gen Justice's life-saving work, visit genjustice.org.

Contact

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