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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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What are DCFS and Annazette Collins Hiding? Agency Fails to Respond to FOIA Request about Collins' Employment

Chicago, Ill. – The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services has failed one of the first tests of a new law that went into effect Jan. 1 of this year that requires state agencies to respond within five business days to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

On Jan. 8, Jonathan Goldman, a Democratic candidate for state representative in the 10th District, filed a request to DCFS concerning State Rep. Annazette Collin's employment as a social worker with the agency. He specifically asked for information about her hiring date, salary and who authorized her hiring.

"My curiosity was piqued when I saw that Ms. Collins, who is already employed by the State as a legislator, making \$76,732 in 2008, had landed another job with the state during a time of record unemployment when the state has laid off thousands of workers," said Goldman. "I made a simple FOIA request 18 days ago and still haven't heard from DCFS."

When five business days had passed with no response, Goldman contacted DCFS on Jan. 15 to inquire about his request and was told he would receive a letter requesting an extension from the agency in the mail. He still hasn't received correspondence of any kind from the department.

"You have to wonder what they're hiding when an agency doesn't respond to a direct and specific request like mine so close to an important election," said Goldman. "It's now one week before the election, and voters are entitled to have this public information released. Unfortunately, it appears the DCFS is playing political games concerning Rep. Collins' employment."

"DCFS' actions beg the questions: is there something we shouldn't know about why or how Rep. Collins was hired or how much she's making?"

According to public records, in addition to her state legislator pay, Collins earned \$81,250 as a part-time consultant to the Chicago Public Schools in 2008, for a combined salary of \$157,982 that year. In addition, her husband, Keith Langston, took home \$79,572 as a DCFS senior public service administrator that same year.

“Rep. Collins has made a career of jumping from one government payroll to another. For the past nine years, she has always collected two paychecks from public payrolls, at a time when tens of thousands of people have lost their jobs with the State,” said Goldman.

A public interest advocate for 17 years, Goldman has fought for environmental, education, public health and consumer issues, building a strong track record as one of the most successful public interest advocates at the Capitol. He most recently served for seven years as Executive Director of the Illinois Environmental Council, before starting Advocacy Incorporated, a public interest advocacy and consulting business serving non-profit organizations.

For more information about Jonathan Goldman’s campaign, call 888-633-2010 or visit www.JonathanForIllinois.com.

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