

THE FLORIDA SENATE

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COMMITTEES:
Health Care
Domestic Security
Environmental Preservation, Vice-Chair
General Government Appropriations

SENATOR GARY SIPLIN
19th District

March 28, 2006

Stephen J. Nelson, M.D.
Chairman
Medical Examiners Commission
Florida Department of Law Enforcement
P.O. Box 1489
Tallahassee, FL 32302

Dear Dr. Nelson:

Florida Statutes specifically provides for the removal of a medical examiner by your Commission in the event of certain offenses, including "A material misrepresentation of data upon which an opinion or conclusion as a medical examiner is based;" and, "Negligence or the failure to perform the duties required of a medical examiner with that level of care or skill which is recognized by reasonably prudent medical examiners as being acceptable under similar conditions and circumstances." (F.S. 406.075 (1)(g)(i))

This letter is to officially call upon the Medical Examiners Commission to exercise the authority vested by Florida Statutes and immediately order the removal of Dr. Charles Siebert as Bay County Medical Examiner.

We have all seen and read the reports about the outrageous findings by Dr. Siebert regarding the tragic death of Martin Lee Anderson, the 14-year old who died while in the custody of the Bay County Sheriff's boot camp. Despite the video tape documenting a severe beating at the hands of his captors, Dr. Siebert concluded that death was due to natural causes and attributable to the boy's genetic inheritance of the sickle cell trait.

Fortunately, preliminary indications are that his findings are expected to be reversed, thanks to an independent autopsy subsequently conducted.

Unfortunately, this is not Dr. Siebert's first major blunder. We have learned of at least three other incidences where such mistakes as wrong sex, phantom organs, and wrong causes of death were routinely noted.

With Dr. Siebert, there appears an unmistakable pattern of slipshod work which should not and cannot be tolerated. His cavalier attitude towards the profession not only jeopardizes

investigations, it causes needless harm to the families who have already endured enough suffering.

We urge you to act on your statutory authority and spare the people of Florida additional expense and embarrassment due to Dr. Siebert's incompetence.

Sincerely,

Senator Anthony "Tony" Hill
District 1

Senator Frederica Wilson
District 33

Senator Gary Siplin
District 19

Cc: Governor Jeb Bush