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To the Editor:

As the regional union representative for the 46 professional employees at Tryon Boys Residential Center, I commend the Fulton County Board of Supervisors' call for the resignation of Office of Children and Family Services Commissioner Gladys Carrion. This issue is about more than just the proposed closure of Tryon Boys, though the devastating impact on the employees and the community is reason enough. It is also about holding Commissioner Carrion responsible for her ongoing lack of action to fix the problems in the system she inherited when she took office two years ago.

She was well aware when she came in that there were problems with the provision of mental health services, substance abuse services and education—all issues identified by both the US Department of Justice and the Governor's juvenile justice task force. Rather than directly addressing these issues, Commissioner Carrion instead chose to demonize her own workforce, and set out on a mission to take down as much of the system as she could. She has ignored the critical needs of our young offenders and the communities they come from.

OCFS has some excellent people working in its facilities, including counselors, teachers, nurses, vocational instructors and mental health professionals. They deliver quality services and care in their work with troubled kids, as many "graduates" of Tryon will attest. Still, they can't work miracles without appropriate support. Commissioner Carrion has turned her back on the whole system, not just Tryon, and should be held accountable.

Kevin R. Conley
Regional Coordinator
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