IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

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*Baby ripped from the arms of American Idol finalist by CPS during hostile Florida hospital stay and placed with white foster family.*

A simple consultation at Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital in St. Petersburg, FL has left a family in the fight of their lives after their son was assessed by a controversial physician, Dr. Sally Smith.

On February 26, 2021, Syesha Mercado, a former American Idol finalist visited the hospital hoping to receive assistance with her then 13-month-old son Amen’Ra as he made the transition from breastfeeding to exclusively eating solid foods and bottle feeding.

Instead of being released to his parents, on March 11, 2021, Syesha was confronted by child protective investigator Danielle McCoy and armed officers, claiming she denied her son a B12 shot and as a result, Manatee Child Protective Services (CPS) would be taking custody of her child.

“That was never the case, we did not refuse B12.” said Syesha. “This is unbelievable. As a first-time mom, I have a right to seek and expect equitable care and support at medical institutions. I have a right to inquire about what is being recommended and why.”

She and her partner, Amen’Ra’s father Tyron Deener, who works as a child welfare professional, were ordered to leave the hospital by Pinellas County Police and faced threats of being charged with trespassing.

The family asserts they are victims of questionable statewide child protection practices, and a broken child welfare system. They maintain that they are on receiving end of discrimination and intimidation after a condescending and disparaging investigation.

Manatee CPS told the court that Amen’Ra would be placed into a medical foster care home but he was placed with a non-medical foster family. No effort was made to place the child with a relative and the family believes that CPS failed to interview qualified family members.

On May 9, 2021, which was proclaimed Syesha Mercado Day by Sarasota City, FL back in 2008, Syesha and Tyron plan to hold a press conference to discuss the details leading up to their horrific hospital visit, the treatment they received from officials during their hospital stay and the legal battle with CPS. The family has created a GoFundMe to assist with the thousands of dollars required to hire lawyers and experts to challenge the removal.

For more information, press only, contact: wehavetherighttoberight@gmail.com.