

Investigation Clears Straight, Inc., 'Of

BY JIM ROHRER
Batavia Bureau Chief

MILFORD—Straight, Inc., the drug rehabilitation program here which came under fire in September from the mother of a Loveland boy who left the program, has been cleared in a local investigation of any wrongdoing.

As a result of the positive report from Clermont County Children's Services, the Ohio Bureau of Drug Abuse has declined to undertake another investigation of Straight. That agency had looked into the program earlier this year.

Jerry Collamore, a spokesman for the Ohio Department of Public Welfare, said allegations of abuse in the program contained in a letter from Lebanon attorney Joanne Hash had been divided into two areas of investigation.

ALLEGATIONS OF drug abuse were turned over to the Ohio Bureau of Drug Abuse, he said, and allegations of potential child abuse were given to Children's Services.

Stewart Bell, director of the Bureau of Drug Abuse, said his office would not

pursue an investigation, based on the favorable report from Children's Services, and because his agency had previously investigated allegations against Straight last April.

The earlier report praised the efforts of Straight workers, and Bell said his opinion was that further investigation was not warranted. "Straight is doing the job it set out to do," he said. "Most of these allegations against the program come from people who don't understand it."

MARLENE PRESTON, director of the

Clermont County agency, said her agency would not state welfare. Preston said she results of the investigation his decision not the Clermont uncovered no w

Still pending \$80,000 civil damage suit, filed by Patricia who claims she members last County court

ght, Inc., 'Of Any Wrongdoing'

Investigation, based on the report from Children's Services, says his agency had previously filed allegations against Straight

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Clermont County Children's Services Agency, said her agency's report was mailed to state welfare officials in mid-October. Preston said she could not comment on the results of the investigation, but Bell said his decision not to proceed was based on the Clermont County report which uncovered no wrongdoing.

Still pending against Straight is an \$80,000 civil damage suit in Warren County, filed by Patricia Wynne of Maineville, who claims she was assaulted by Straight and other members last summer at the Warren County courthouse during a custody

hearing involving her son, then a client at Straight.

Hash, who is Wynne's attorney, had written a letter to state welfare officials, charging that Straight violated Ohio law in several areas by failing to operate with proper licensing, removing children from their homes unlawfully and using brain-washing techniques.

Wynne's son has since been removed from Straight and is in her temporary custody. The youth had been enrolled in Straight while in the custody of his father, who is divorced from Wynne.