



**Testimony to the Committee on Human Services
In Support of Bill 19-803, The Foster Youth Rights Amendment Act of 2012**

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Good afternoon Councilmember Graham and other Committee members. My name is Andrea Johnson. I am 20 years old and I am currently an undergraduate student at St. Johns University. My goal is to obtain a degree in Political Science.

This summer I am working with The Young Women's Project on its Foster Care Campaign to show my support in their efforts to give youth some necessary tools to succeed. I am here today to testify in support of the Foster Youth Rights Amendment Act of 2012.

In the foster care system there are many downfalls. One of those downfalls is that foster youth aren't informed of their rights. When dealing with authority figures it is of great importance to know exactly what your rights are. No one can possibly use resources or fight inequalities if they aren't even aware of their rights. In order for my peers to utilize all of their resources to the maximum capacity, they must first have the tools to do so.

The Foster Youth Rights Amendment Act of 2012 is of importance to me because it seeks to give rights to those who matter the most. As older youth we have a responsibility to be an inspiration to generations to come. We are also encouraged to change the current standards of how some of our peers are forced to live. It is in our best interest to help out others, not only because it can be considered as right, but because it affects us too.

Foster youth have the right to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. Discrimination within the foster care agency should not be tolerated. Discrimination is a form of hatred towards a particular group of people. This is a very alarming type of attitude to have when dealing with youth in foster care because they are more vulnerable than most youth. Everyone deserves to pursue happiness in whichever way they choose.

Another problem that I have been interested in is youth who aren't living in sanitary, comfortable and safe environments. They are being forced to live in foster homes and group homes that have rodents and insects. This falls back into the category of knowing your rights. If youth knew that they did not have to live in conditions such as these then they would not have to seek other places to live. If our own government fails the youth of tomorrow than

whom will they have to turn to? I believe that this is one of the very reasons our government operates the way it does, so that no child will feel the way my peers do.

Older foster youth will need the support of CFSA so that foster care providers can be held accountable for their actions. Youth will also need the support of other teens that are facing some of the same challenges they are. I think it is important for youth to see the bigger picture and that is you can become anything you want.

Thank you for allowing me to speak and to voice my opinions and suggestions.