



**Testimony to the Committee on Human Services
On the Foster Youth Rights Amendment Act of 2012**

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Hello Chairman Graham and other Councilmembers. My name is Emmanuel Peterson, first off let me thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to listen to my problems and concerns. I am 16 years old and have been living in a group home since I was 13 years old. I'm here today to testify in support of the "Foster Youth Rights Amendment Act of 2012."

The Foster Youth Rights Amendment Act is important to me and all foster youth in general so we can know all the rights we have and can get a full understanding of every right, what they mean, and get the proper help we need if any of our rights get violated. Before I got familiar with my rights, there were some rights I didn't know about that were violated.

The rights I didn't know about were the right to request meetings that include all members of my support team, the right to have assistance in setting up these meetings, and the right to make decisions during these meetings. This right is important to me so I can have the chance to say what is best for me instead of letting people make decisions for me. The right I realized that was violated was the right not to use my allowance to purchase hygiene products, food, or any other item. On April 16, 2012, my group home ran out of lotion and soap. One of the staff told me to buy the soap and lotion with my own money. I didn't end up buying the items, but I was frustrated because I felt like it was wrong and that I shouldn't have to. I now know that was clearly a violation of my rights at my group home. So now, knowing my rights, this can help me prevent these actions from happening again because I can speak up about it.

This is why the bill is important to me. Some of the support that I would need to stop these issues from happening is mainly the concern of CFSA because they are in charge of enforcing the rules and regulations at my group home. After hearing my testimony, I hope you strongly consider passing the Foster Youth Rights Amendment Act of 2012. Thank you for listening to me.