

**Testimony to the Committee on Business, Consumer and Regulatory Affairs  
For The Budget Oversight Hearing on the**

**Department of Employment Services**

**Monica Carter**

**Youth Advocate, Young Women's Project**

**April 25, 2016**

**Good Morning Chairman Orange and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Monica Carter. I am a Ward 8 resident and I attend Bell Multicultural High School. I will graduate in June and I plan to attend a local community college.**

**I am here today to ask the Committee to assign \$1million within the DOES FY17 budget to create an employment program for 500 high school students.**

I have been working at the Young Women's Project since the summer of 2014 and I learned a lot in that short time. My job has helped me become a better person because I have improved my communication skills and my ability to express my emotions to people. I have also learned how to manage my money and budget. I have learned about how to record my time and turn in my timesheets. I do a lot of writing for the YWP blog and I have improved my writing skills a great deal. Most importantly I have learned how to advocate for other young people who are experiencing challenges in life.

I am able to pay my cell phone bill, buy clothes and purchase food. My mom is not working right now and we have to rely on government assistance. There should be more employment opportunities for high school students during the school year. My school does not have any employment programs and we do not have anyone who helps students find jobs. All students are required to have an internship but we also need assistance finding paid work experience.

The SYEP program is great but it is just six weeks out of the entire year. I am thankful for the summer because the money I make helps to buy clothes and school supplies in the fall. The raise in pay and the transportation assistance was a great benefit last summer. This summer I plan to participate in SYEP so that I can save money for college. There should be more opportunities for high school students to work

during the school year though. Right now employment opportunities for high school students through DOES are very limited. Part-time work for high school students can help them focus, explore careers and even help them to find out what they don't want to do in the future.

**Recommendation**

We recommend that the Committee assign \$1 million in local funds within the DOES budget to improve the programming for high school students. This money will create a year round program where up to 500 high school students can work 6-12 hours a week in local businesses and organizations. Youth will be paid an hourly rate of \$8.25. We recommend that DOES use a system similar to SYEP where youth and employers can register on the DOES portal and youth are paid on the Citibank debit card.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.