



**Testimony to the Committee on Health and Human Services
For the Budget Oversight Hearing on the Department of Health**

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Hello Chairwoman Alexander and other Committee members. My name is Tatyannah Hazelton, I am in the 11th grade at Anacostia High School, and I live in ward 8. I currently work for the Young Women's Project as a peer educator.

Before coming to YWP I knew that condoms protect you. I knew that when you don't use them you can catch diseases. I knew about oral sex, but I did not know you could get STIs from it.

The training I received at YWP was very good. It was very helpful and informative. It taught me about many things I did not know – like the female anatomy, male anatomy, menstrual cycle, pregnancy options, and disease. The Young Women's Project also changed my attitude. They taught me that I don't have to rush into something I don't want to do if I don't feel comfortable with. I don't have to rush into anything that I am not feeling. It has allowed me to become more of a positive person.

The training I received has also helped my friends. It has shown them the importance of staying disease-free, while having have safe sex. The Young Women's Project has allowed me to teach my peers about how to stand up for yourself especially around issues of consent. I think my friends stand up for themselves more now after I was trained by the Young Women's Project.

I will use this training in my everyday life to think before I do anything regarding sexual activities. Even if I do get pregnant, I now know my options regarding my pregnancy. I can use this for the rest of my life by knowing how to stay disease free, knowing the importance of healthy relationships, and knowing how to spot unhealthy relationships and abuse. This program is very important.

It is very important to pay youth in these kinds of programs. Youth in my community wait until they are old enough to apply for a job. When we are old enough to apply to a job, they don't hire us because we are in schools most of the day. Programs like this give youth the opportunity to do more than just sitting around playing video games and doing nothing with their friends. Youth feel a responsibility to give their peers the right information they need. This programs helps youths inform other peers about the importance of being safe when being sexually active while providing them with a job. I think it is very hard to get a job where I



live and this program is one of the best opportunities. The Young Women's Project comes to our school to work with us because we are far from the office. YWP gives us a chance even if we lack experience. They train us on everything we need, so I think that peer educators should be a part of every school. Not only do peer educators prevent pregnancy – they also prevent diseases, bullying, unhealthy relationships, and negative behaviors.

Thank you for taking your time to hear my testimony, and the reasons why it is important to for DOH to continue allocating the money for our stipends