



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

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Good afternoon Chairman Graham and other Council Members. My name is Alexuxs Brown. I am 16 years old and have been in the foster care system since I was 3. I will be attending Ballou Senior High School this upcoming school year, and I will be a sophomore. I'm here to testify in support of the Foster Youth Rights Amendment Act of 2012.

The Foster Youth Rights Amendment Act of 2012 is important to me because without being informed of our rights, youth will not have a clear understanding of what our rights are. This brings me to these two rights issues that are being violated.

The first issue that I would like to talk about is the right to have visitations with my parent. For five years, there has been a court order that I have supervised visits with my mother. My social worker has not set up any visits in two years. I set up my own visits. My social worker was not supportive and did not return my phone calls or my foster mother's phone calls. Sometimes I didn't see her for a whole month. One of my rights is to have my social worker communicate with me in a supportive way, return my phone calls, and check in with me regularly. When this bill is passed, social workers will have to be trained on this right and look more closely at these rights.

The second issue I would like to talk about is my right to transportation. I do not live near public transportation – bus or metro. I need to walk down the highway to get to a bus stop. If it wasn't for my boyfriend, I wouldn't have any way to get to where I need to go. My foster mother is 70 years old and cannot drive me everywhere I need to go. She said I could drive her car but I don't have my license. I asked my social worker if I could get my license and she said no. I am planning to ask my judge at my next hearing. I have a right to transportation. When this bill is passed, my social worker will understand that I have a right to transportation and will be more open to helping me solve my transportation problems.

The Young Women's Project has helped me so my voice can be heard on my issues and concerns. But a lot of youth don't know what their rights are and what to do to get what they need if their social worker is not helping them. I have three suggestions to make sure that the Foster Youth Rights Amendment Act is enforced. First, I think that the foster care system is half of the reason why youth in foster care don't become anything in life. This can change if there are more reliable, effective, and realistic programs for youth in foster care. Second, I suggest that the Council create a fund for youth to make sure our rights are upheld. Third, I suggest that the Council create a better monitoring system for social workers so that they understand youth rights and respect them.

Thank you for your attention and your patience. I hope that the bill passes because it won't only benefit me but also other foster youth.