



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

**Chanika Parks
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Good Afternoon Councilmember Graham. Thanks for taking the time to hear my testimony. My name is Chanika Parks and I am 17 years of age and I work with the Young Women's project Foster Care Campaign. I'm here to testify in support of the Foster Youth Rights Amendment Act of 2012.

First, I would like to speak on the right to have my social worker communicate with me in a supportive way, such as returning my phone calls and checking with me regularly. I only talk to my social when she calls or meets with me twice a month. I can't call her when I need her because she doesn't have an agency cell phone.

Next, I would like to talk about the right to have face to face visitation with my siblings twice a month. That wasn't happening and I had to take matters into my own hands and contact my little sister's fathers to set up visitation. I thought this was the social workers' responsibility. I have a little sister in Virginia that I have no contact information for and I haven't seen in months. My GAL and social worker said they were going to schedule a date, but they never did.

Another right states foster youth should have privileges and responsibilities the same as those provided other children in the household. I wasn't treated fairly in my previous foster home placement because there wasn't air conditioning in my room. My foster mother's biological daughter had an air conditioner in her room, but they only gave me a fan. It was really hard for me to sleep through the night in the heat, so I am really tired in the morning when it's time for me to go to work.

I also felt that my rights were violated because we are supposed to have our own beds. I didn't have my own bed at my last foster home because when I wasn't there, other people slept in my bed. They also had sex in my bed, which was disrespectful.

There's also a right that says we are supposed to have sufficient individual storage space for clothing and personal space. Unfortunately someone had their belongings in my storage space and I did not have a dresser to store my clothes. CFSA and partnering agencies should be doing pop up visits in foster home placements. Thank you Councilmembers for listening to my testimony.