



**Eric D Davis  
Foster Care Campaign Staff, Young Women's Project  
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Good afternoon Chairman Graham and other Council Members. My name is Eric D. Davis. I am 16 years old and have been within CFSA for the past three months. I am currently enrolled at Dunbar Senior High School and work part time at the Young Women's Project Foster Care Campaign and Denny's on Benning Road. Both jobs I found without help from the system. I would like to talk to you and other council members about LGBTQ issues and group homes.

On my first day in the system, a CFSA social worker placed me in a foster home for the night. Before the social worker left, the foster parent pulled her to the side and inquired about my sexuality. The social worker told her that she didn't know. I later told the foster parent that I was gay, and her response was "that wasn't what I ordered." She told me that she did not want to house gay children because she went to church. I told her that I went to church every Sunday and sung in the choir. She said that being gay was a sin at her church. I called the social worker that night and told her that I wanted to leave and she had someone pick me up the next day.

Since then I have been in a group home. My roommate and I are the only gay boys there, and it was hard to live around everyone at first. The night staff workers are homophobic and antagonize me, which is sad because it's supposed to be a safe environment. The employees are really out of control. They cook for us, but eat our food and tell us that we can only eat when they want us to. If we miss those times, we don't eat.

I have only been with CFSA for a short time, but my life has been hell. My room has been broken into multiple times, including during my first week. There is a lock on my door but they pried it open. Someone stole my soap, deodorant, cell phone, towel, toothbrush, and three Polo outfits. None of it was replaced. I was unable to open my door from inside my room and would have to wait for someone to open it from the outside. I told the staff and my social worker, but it still took three weeks to fix the door. It's sad because it's like they get paid to do nothing. They treat it like it's a game, but it's not because there are kids' lives at risk.

I'm the second youngest person in my group home, but I'm the only one who has a job or is looking for one. Half of the kids in my group home have dropped out of school and sit in the house all day and play video games. I feel like they should be doing something productive with their time to better their lives so when the time comes and they age out they will be stable and not on the streets depending on others. No one should have to live such a hard life.

At the same time, it's not their fault because CFSA and social workers are being paid to assist kids that want to make something of themselves. If social workers were doing their jobs, more kids would be fulfilling their goals and there wouldn't be as many kids on the street and on the run because of something dumb. I didn't get a social worker until my third week but she's been pretty good.

Both CFSA and group homes should provide programs that will help kids better themselves both mentally and physically. If kids are not in school, there should be somewhere for them to go during the day to receive vocational education, or training to help them look for jobs. That way they will be prepared for life when they leave the system, and they won't become homeless. A lot of people I know who aged out of the system are now homeless.