

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

Department of Employment Services

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Good Morning Chairman Orange and members of the Committee on Business, Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. 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. After I graduate I plan to attend college and become a social worker.

I'm here today to talk about the value of getting work experience while in high school and share recommendations for improving DOES employment programming for high school students.

I have been working at 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. We do not receive any help from my father who lives in Virginia. The money that my mother receives doesn't go very far so the money that I make really helps to pay for things. I am also saving the money that I make to pay for my graduation fees and possibly participate in our senior trip to New York City and New Jersey.

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 6 weeks out of the entire year. I am thankful for the summer because the money I make during the summer help me to buy clothes and school supplies in the fall. The raise in pay and the transportation assistance was a great benefit last summer. My first summer participating in SYEP I worked as a Youth Advocate at the Young Women's Project. We researched homeless youth services and resources and presented to city leaders. The second summer I worked at my school (Bell Multicultural) cleaning classrooms, prepared the school for the fall, gave school tours and assisted with the hospitality program.

Having a job motivates me to be a better person. It helps to keep me focused and out of trouble. I am glad that I can share the little money that I make with my family. I don't like seeing people in my family struggle and it feels good to pay for things myself and help my siblings, nieces and nephews have things that they need such as food and clothes.

I have the following recommendations for DOES:

- There should be more employment opportunities for high school students.
- DOES and DCPS should work together to coordinate employment and internship opportunities. Students need support finding jobs and they we need opportunities for paid work experiences. There should also be programs to help youth learn how to budget and save money so they do not waste the money that they are making.
- DOES should create an easier way to collect and verify documents for SYEP and other programs. It seems like every year we have to bring in and certify the same documents.