

**Testimony to the Committee on Human Services
For the Performance Oversight Hearing on the Child and Family Services Agency**

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Good afternoon Chairman Graham and Council Members. Thank you for listening to my colleagues and me today. My name is Samaria Holton. I am eighteen years old and will be attending Trinity college, majoring in early childhood education. I am not part of the DC Foster Care System, but at the Young Woman's Project I work with my peers to better the problems within the system. I am here today to testify, and to support my peers.

Last year we came to this Committee and we asked for your support. We also worked really hard to get the things we wanted – the allowance, the clothing voucher, ILP stipend, and the transportation subsidy. We reached out to CFSA through emails and testimonies and had several meetings with Director Donald. She responded to the emails right away. She listened. And she worked with us to develop these policies. We really made a change for us but also all foster youth in the system. Now we are working to make sure that they get implemented.

Seeing these policies passed made me feel like we really accomplished something. I appreciate you and Director Donald listening to our problems and not just trying to push them away. Thank you for responding to us and for listening to our stories and connecting and being understanding while we were testifying.

Now that these issues are behind us, there are a couple of more problems that we need to take on. Job readiness is an issue that I've worked on a lot in the past year. Personally, I am trying to find a job now. It's difficult. I don't have any connections. You need to know someone to get a job. Otherwise, people look past you. The system should have something that helps youth to make connections with people from companies who can hire them. They also need job readiness training and workshops on professional dress, and resume-cover letter writing. Youth aging out should be interested. I believe it should be mandatory for kids who are 18.

I was glad to hear that CFSA started financial management workshops. This is really important to learn about credit, banking, taxes, and getting credit cards. I messed up my credit from not knowing any of this. OYE should offer classes on all of these things.

Thank you for listening to my testimony.