

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

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Good morning Council member Graham and other Committee members. My name is Shaniqua Britt and I am 20 years old. I have been in the foster care system for eight years. I currently work at the Young Women's Project on the Foster Care Campaign, where I work to change the foster care system for the better. I am here to support the Foster Youth Employment Amendment Act of 2012.

I currently attend Bennett Career Institute, where I'm studying barbering. Although I don't like doing hair, I've been doing hair my whole life. Hair styling is a billion dollar industry. I don't know what I will do eventually, but I would like to be a pediatrician, veterinarian, or own my own construction company and build houses like my father.

I've worked at YWP since November, but worked there when I was 16 through SYEP. I've also had three to four temporary jobs that have all been within the federal government. My experience in looking for a job is that CFSA always wants youth to have a job, but they don't necessarily give you enough support, resources, or information to actually find one. A lot of people don't even know how to use the internet. We need someone to show us how to look for jobs and websites to look on. We also need interview skills because most youth don't know how to dress or talk for an interview.

I have been looking for a job for the last six months. I look for entry level, cashier, or cleaning jobs. CFSA suggests that we go out and find jobs ourselves and check in with them to prove we're actually looking for a job. That doesn't help us. I understand that they are trying to make us independent, but we still need support and resources to help us find the job. CFSA should talk to youth and help them instead of just ordering them to do things.

When I started working at 16 it was very hard for me to apply for a job. I didn't have all the right information that I needed such as an ID, proof of residence, and my resume. I didn't even know what a resume was. CFSA should really start helping youth find jobs or get them ready for the job world. We need things like job training,



work prep, and workshops to help us with our resumes, getting our ID, and support groups and information on programs. Youth need more supportive programs like Strive DC, where we have a place to go and learn how to do things and are given fare cards and tokens so we can get back and forth.

Paid internships are also good because it will help a lot of youth that can't get jobs, like youth with felonies and children. Paid internships will give us experience and opportunities to make money. Youth also need transportation so we can get to the interview and the job. Some jobs require a training period where you have to go in for several days, but you're not paid.

Thank you for an opportunity to present my testimony.

I think this bill will really help youth in foster care. It gives us a better chance in helping us with employment.