

Catholic Community Services

A Forever Home for Everyone

Senator Bates, Representative Nathanson, members of the committee, my name is Sonjia Beversdorf. I am here to testify in favor of HB 3445.

My mom and dad got married when they were 18 years old. Dad joined the Marines right away so he wasn't home very much. My mom drank too much so she wasn't really there for us kids either.

When I was five years old my parents got divorced. That is when mom started using drugs and letting her boy-friends crash at our house. Some of my mom's boyfriends were very abusive. It was hard on my brother and me but my little sister got the worst of it. All of us kids ended up in foster care and separated from one another. Losing contact with my brother and sister was the hardest part for me. I was in six different foster homes before I went to live in my Community Home. At first I didn't believe it when they told me the Community Home was my home and I wouldn't be asked to leave. I tested that promise in many ways but gradually I started to believe it. One of the biggest things this did for me was to give me the confidence that I wouldn't have to switch schools again. With this confidence I started working hard to get good grades and let myself make new friends.

I liked it in the Community Home but as soon as I turned eighteen I wanted to get out on my own. When I finally did get out I had no idea what I really wanted to do with my life.

At first I was floundering but, when I got pregnant, I knew that I wanted to deliver a healthy baby. At first I thought it might be best if I gave my baby up for adoption but by the time Maddox was born I realized I loved him and couldn't give him up. That is when I decided to reconnect with Catholic Community Services. I am so glad I did. I am learning that I can be a good mom but it isn't easy because I didn't grow up with a good role model. I've learned that bonding with my baby and keeping him safe are the most important things I can do as a parent. I have also learned that when I get too stressed out it makes it harder for me to bond with Maddox and keep him safe.

Having people around who care about me and Maddox makes a lot of difference. Catholic Community Services also offered me a job. With the support of caring people and good job I am able to provide Maddox and myself with a good home. I have heard it said that parents who were abused as children are more likely to abuse their own children. This may be true but I've learned it doesn't have to be that way. I couldn't do a good job raising Maddox alone but I am not alone. I have the support I need. Most young women who age out of foster care don't get the kind of support I receive though and that is why I am urging you to support HB 3445. Thank you.

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