



Oregon Foster Youth CONNECTION

Improving the Oregon foster care system through advocacy, activism and leadership.

Testimony in Support of HB 2889 & HB 2890
Human Services and Housing Committee
March 16, 2015

Growing up, I did not have a lot of stability in my immediate family. Due to poor living conditions and a constant struggle to find food and a job, a single mother with three kids had no choice but to let us go to DHS (Department of Human Services). At first it was scary, I was in the 6th grade and had no idea clue what was going on. My brother, sister and I were fortunate to stick together with one family.

The family was nice and the house was in fair condition to live in. All and all it was a great house hold. My mother got her act together a year later and all three of us moved back "home". Shortly after my mother fell back into the old life style she was accustomed to which was criminal activity, and the vigorous battle against addiction. My mother had decided to run from the state and Because of this I moved into care again at the end of 8th grade. Before I was placed in a more permanent foster home, my brother and sister and I were placed in a emergency temporary foster home. We all stayed with that family for 4 to 5 days. Back in 8th grade I was very close friends with Oliver, whose family decided to take my sister in I into care once we returned. We stayed with Oliver's family for 5 years. My brother was placed in the same county, actually quite close to my sister and I.

Oliver, my best friend, and his family were very wealthy compared to my recent standard of living. In other words you could consider them middle class, and my immediate family lower class. This transition was very tough but at the same time worth it in every way, Oliver's parents were well educated, had purposed a structured plan for my future along with my younger sister's, and were very understanding when it came to my needs and wants. Freshman year I dedicated myself to being successful, obeying the system and regulations of DHS, ILP, and school. I realized opportunity with the services that were available, and power, power to change my future. My foster parents were very supportive and truly loved me as if I were their own. I stayed with that family throughout high school, and just recently moved into another home because of unhealthy relationships in my prior foster family (Oliver's family). Currently I am well treated and respected here and things are going smooth. I am currently working fulltime along with attending Portland Community College. A transition to becoming an independent is in process.

In high school I was fortunate enough to have a supportive foster family. They helped me set up a savings account at age 14 and taught me a lot about business and the financial world. I took this knowledge and utilized it in many courses throughout high school. I became a smarter person and now have a great job, good morals and values, and finally a strong structure financially.

There were restriction upheld by my foster parents about attending a school related activity: skate club. With constant pressure towards the adults my drive for normalcy started there. I wouldn't give up I pressed on until we had made an agreement. That agreement consist of me wearing safety gear and only skateboarding at the club or local park, not in the driveway. All in all the life style change, was not too extreme.

Thank You,
Joshua Ashbaugh