

## Rosenberg Corey

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**From:** Doumit Matt  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 08, 2017 5:08 PM  
**To:** Sen Gelser  
**Cc:** Rosenberg Corey  
**Subject:** RE: SB 265 Testimony

Can do.

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**From:** Sen Gelser  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 8, 2017 5:06 PM  
**To:** Doumit Matt <Matt.Doumit@oregonlegislature.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: SB 265 Testimony

This was sent prior to the hearing and I did not see it until now, could you please add it to OLIS since it was sent on time?

Thank you!  
Sara

Senator Sara Gelser  
Deputy Majority Leader  
Chair, Senate Human Services Committee  
(503) 986-1708  
Sen.saragelser @state.or.us

**Scheduling requests** please contact Chief of Staff Angela Donley: [angela.donley@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:angela.donley@oregonlegislature.gov) or 503-986-1708

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**From:** Lora Edwards <[misslorabeth@gmail.com](mailto:misslorabeth@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 8, 2017 at 12:31 PM  
**To:** Sara Gelser <[sen.saragelser@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:sen.saragelser@oregonlegislature.gov)>  
**Subject:** SB 265 Testimony

Hello Senator Gelser,

I wanted to show my support for Senate Bill 265 by submitting a brief testimony to you and the committee and also by attending the Public Hearing today. I aged out of foster care over 10 years ago, and so my hope is

that my experiences are that of an old system and that today's children are not experiencing anything similar to my childhood. I don't remember many of my case workers. To my memory, those were the stern faced ladies that drove me around and spoke privately with my foster parents in the kitchen. I spent at least 9 years of my life (accumulatively) in foster care. I was removed from and reunited with one or the other of my parents three times before I was finally given permanent status with my foster parents at the age of 14.

The one memory I do have of my case worker speaking to me, was when she reprimanded me for my failures in school and for disobeying my foster parents. She told me that I didn't deserve these people, that I should be more grateful, and that I could very easily be moved to a group home. Up until that point I had lived with my foster parents for four years and I had believed that they were irrevocably my family. She convinced me that day that my foster parents were not my family and pulled my world right out from under my feet. Two weeks later, my foster parents, upon her advice, made me spend a weekend "grounded" at a group foster home, just to teach me a lesson. I was told that I couldn't come back if I didn't turn my behavior around. So, I turned my behavior around, because that group foster home was awful. Awful. And I got my GED and moved out on my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The point of all of this is that a system that fails to nurture youth into trusting that their new family is unconditional, is a system that causes youth to disconnect from relationships and fail to thrive.

For Four years, I knew that I knew that I knew that my foster parents loved me and that I belonged in their home. And one conversation from just one case worker who wrongly believed that I just needed a stern telling off ruined for me the only constant security in my life. It took me years to put the pieces back together, and let me tell you – it is nothing short of a miracle that I have become an emotionally stable, financially secure adult.

If you take anything away from my story at all, please know that case workers should absolutely be in constant contact with their children, but also that they need to understand the consequences of their words. I cannot fathom how someone with a college education that included childhood development and psychology could rationalize the behavior of my old case worker. That should never have happened, and I believe that, with proper training, structure, and accountability, it won't happen again.

Senator, you have done great things already for our Foster Youth, and I thank you for your continued efforts to improve the lives of these vulnerable children. I believe that Oregon is headed in the right direction and making progress with the needs of the child in mind, rather than the needs of the system.

Thank you,

-Lora Edwards