

Hello,

My name is Alexis Baska, I'm 21 years old and I spent 5 ½ years in Oregon's foster care system. I am in support of HB 4009 because I think that it brings back a lost hope. When a parents rights are terminated, the parent(s) is more likely to give up on trying to better themselves for their children. My mother is someone who struggles heavily with addiction, not unlike many people. When we would go to permanency hearings, my mother would be treated very poorly by people who had unmeetable standards. I grew up in Vernonia, a small and isolated town in Columbia County. The courts wanted my mother to go to outpatient treatment in St. Helens, 45 minutes from Vernonia. My mother had a suspended license and didn't have access to public transportation to get back and forth.

Very quickly I saw my mother losing hope that she'd ever get me back, it seemed that all odds were against her. After the hope that she had dwindled down to nothing, my mothers attraction to her vices got stronger and I was more worried about her than ever. If my mother would have had more time to try and find resources or alternatives, the likelihood that I would have been returned home would have been significantly greater. She gave up on trying when she felt that the clock was running out and that the outcome would be that her rights were going to be terminated no matter how hard she tried.

I believe that HB 4009 will restore hope in families that feel that they're forever broken. Healing shouldn't have a timeline. Unfortunately, courts don't seem to feel the same way. I aged out of the system, I was never adopted or reunited. The system failed me because it told my mother that there was no use in trying to get me back.