

Testimony in Support of SB 745

Senate Human Services Committee

March 12, 2019

Good afternoon, Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Heard, and members of the committee, my name is my name is Hanna Dekker, I'm 21 and I currently live in Multnomah County, District 44, in a building that was built through a program called ILP. ILP is the Independent Living Program. ILP is a program that currently helps foster youth ages 16 through 21. OFYC is currently trying to pass this bill SB 745 to expand the age range that ILP will help and increase state funding to help ILP hire on new staff and hopefully expand the age range to 14- 23 so that youth have more access to ILP services. I recently aged out of care and its extremely nerve wracking. It's harder than I thought it would be to not have the support of my ILP worker but it is extremely convenient to have the program through ILP that I live in due to the fact that I am able to live here after I have aged out of care.

When I went into foster care at 16 I was able to access to ILP and got set up with a coach. I had 4 different ILP coaches while in care for multiple different reasons such as better job opportunities with better pay for them. Having an ILP worker helped me learn a lot of goal creating, budging, and time management that I wouldn't have learned if I did not have access to ILP due to the fact that schools don't go in depth about these topics, typically they only scratch the surface for that information. I personally was not able to learn this information due to the fact that I was not in my foster placements long enough to be able to build a connection and talk about these things. In my own opinion I believe youth should have access to ILP at 14 so that they can start to learn those skills and more early on so they have more time to practice those skills. ILP used to have access to discretionary funds to getting laptops for youth in school so they have a way to access to school work at home and due to lack of funding from ILP many youth are not able to access school work outside of school. I was not able to access this particular opportunity, which would have assisted me throughout my high school career.

With this bill more youth will have access to ILP services that include but is not limited to these skills and opportunities. We hope that hearing some of our personal experiences will help you help us pass this bill for future foster youth. Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy day to attend this hearing.