

House Human Services and Housing

April 29, 2019

Support of SB 278

Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chair Noble, Members of the committee

Hello, my name is Hanna Dekker and I am here representing OFYC. OFYC stands for Oregon Foster Youth Connection. OFYC is a statewide, youth led advocacy group of current and former foster youth between the ages of 14 and 24. Today I am here to talk about Senate Bill 278 which talks about assisting foster youth to achieve incentives for landlords to take a chance with foster youth, allows foster youth to build rental history, and enter adulthood with more stability. As a foster youth it is harder to obtain stable, affordable housing. Foster youth constantly struggle with things like having no credit history, an adult with credit history to cosign, or don't make enough income to meet rental requirements. As we know, we have a housing crisis across Oregon, and former foster youth are one population at significant risk of homelessness in our current housing environment.

SB 278 personally helps me due to the fact that I have recently aged out of care will need assistance acquiring my own place to call home. Currently, I am in a program through the Independent Living Program(ILP) that helps foster youth aging out of care and, even though I am 21 [and no longer in foster care], I am able to stay there for a year, which for me ends later this year. In this program foster youth get to experience rent-like situations, we pay rent each month and they try to make it as affordable as possible. I have already struggled a little with rent due to not having enough income. I also have a 6 month old puppy, which brings its own liabilities and responsibilities. This bill will help me because currently I do struggle with not having rent history or anyone to cosign.

Once my time in this ILP program has ended I will be required to move out and find my own place and I am extremely nervous about it due to the fact that living in Portland is super expensive and I also have no credit history at the moment. This bill will not only help me but also other foster youth that are between the ages of 16 to 27 which really helps foster youth as a whole. This would be similar to a safety net for current and former foster youth because we will be able to beat the stereotype and succeed in reaching our goals of being independent and stable. Thank you for taking time out of your day today to listen.