

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



PATRICIA MCMANAMAN
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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 15, 2012

TO: The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B.2589. S.D. 1 - RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH**
Hearing: Thursday, March 15, 2012; 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to require the Department of Human Services to offer and provide former foster youth enrollment in an appropriate medical assistance program and to continue to provide assistance to the former foster youth until they reach age 26.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill but finds it unnecessary as DHS is already working on amending the Medicaid State Plan to allow the phased in enrollment of former foster youth as proposed in this bill.

Under the federal Affordable Care Act, beginning in 2014, individuals who aged out of foster care and are younger than 26 years will be eligible for Medicaid. DHS is already pursuing a phase-in of this by seeking approval from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to cover individuals who aged out of foster care

and are younger than twenty-four years in 2012 and those younger than twenty-five years in 2013.

The DHS has incorporated the costs for aged out foster youth, up to age 24, into its FY 2013-2014 budget. The additional \$500,000 that would be required to cover aged-out foster youth up to age 26 has not been incorporated into the FY 2013-2014 budget. As such, an additional \$500,000 in State funding will be needed.

The planned phased-in approach will allow identification of the cohort of individuals to be covered in 2014 and to begin their coverage now. It also permits a gradual increase in enrollment that was budgeted.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



**SB2589 SD1
RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH
House Committee on Human Services**

March 15, 2012

9:00 a.m.

Room 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB2589 SD1, which would require the department of human services to offer and provide former foster youth enrollment in an appropriate medical assistance program and continue to provide assistance to the former foster youth until they reach age twenty-six.

Approximately 52 percent of the children placed in foster care in Hawai'i are of Native Hawaiian ancestry, and often times these children are not provided with a foundation to succeed before they exit the system. When foster youth age out of the system, they no longer have a support mechanism to maintain their healthcare coverage. Enrolling former foster youth in an appropriate medical assistance program would significantly benefit these children and society as a whole. This measure would provide a safety net for former foster youth to maintain their health needs and become productive and self-sufficient adults.

While we support the original language of the bill that would re-enroll former foster youth in an appropriate medical assistance program, OHA supports any mechanism that would improve the status quo.

OHA urges the Committee to PASS SB2589 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 702 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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Daryl Selman, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Aloha House

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii

Assistive Technology Resource Ctrs. of HI

Bay Clinic, Inc.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Honolulu

Big Island Substance Abuse Council

Blueprint for Change

Bobby Benson Center

Catholic Charities Hawaii

Central Oahu Youth Services Assn.

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Missing Child Center of HI

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Behavioral Health

Hawaii Student Television

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition

Hina Mauka Teen Care

Hui Malama Learning Center

Kahi Mohala Behavioral Health

Kama'aina Kids, Inc.

KEY (Kualoa-Heeia Ecumenical Youth)
Project

Kids Behavioral Health

Kids Hurt Too

Kokua Kahi Valley

Kula No Na Poe Hawaii

Lanai Community Health Center

Life Foundation

Marimed Foundation

The Maui Farm, Inc.

Maui Youth and Family Services

Palama Settlement

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together (PACT)

Planned Parenthood of Hawaii

Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center
Kona Unit

REAL

Salvation Army Family Intervention Svcs.

Salvation Army Family Treatment Svcs.

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community Center

The Catalyst Group

The Children's Alliance of Hawaii

Waikiki Health Center

Women Helping Women

YouthVision

YWCA of Kauai

March 13, 2012

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2589 RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SB 2589 Relating to Foster Youth.

When youth age out of foster care at 18, they are suddenly faced with coping with all of the tasks of independent living without adult support or guidance. They must obtain housing, seek employment, manage a budget, and meet many other new and often overwhelming responsibilities. It is not surprising that some fail to meet all of the complex requirements for applying for and renewing their medical assistance benefits.

When youth adults lack medical assistance coverage, it can result in serious harm resulting from untreated illness or injury, inappropriate use of emergency medical services, and unnecessary costs. The stories below illustrate what happens to former foster youth when they lack medical benefits. The stories are true, but names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Sarah used hospital emergency rooms as her primary source of medical care. When she was sick or injured, she delayed seeking help until the pain and sickness became too much to bear. If Sarah had consistent medical coverage and could establish a relationship with a doctor who knew her history and saw her regularly, the frequency and severity of her asthma attacks could have been greatly reduced. The cost of managing her asthma and other health needs would have been much lower.

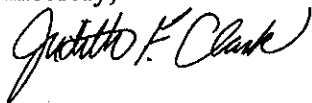
Kalani did not know why he was feeling increasingly tired and weak. When he complained to his friends, they advised him to get more sleep, take some vitamins or stop partying so much. Eventually Kalani lost his job, because he could no longer lift heavy boxes. When Kalani became desperate enough to seek medical

help, he was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy. If he had been able to see a doctor when his symptoms began, he might have been able to retain more mobility and strength as a result of prompt diagnosis and treatment.

Ensuring that former foster youth have access to medical care in their young adult years will improve the health of these young adults while reducing the costs of their medical care and avoiding inappropriate use of emergency facilities.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Judith F. Clark
Executive Director

Testimony for HUS 3/15/2012 9:00:00 AM SB2589

Conference room: 329

Testifier position: Support

Testifier will be present: No

Submitted by: Hardy Spoehr

Organization: Papa Ola Lokahi

E-mail: hspoehr@papaolalokahi.org

Submitted on: 3/13/2012

Comments:

Aloha. Papa Ola Lokahi strongly supports this measure. Thank you



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY SUITE C-210 HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, March 15, 2012
9am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Delia Ulma, Statewide Initiative Coordinator**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

Re: **Supporting the Intent of SB 2589, RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH**

My name is Delia Ulma and I am a Statewide Initiative Coordinator for the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, the local site for the national Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. EPIC 'Ohana is the lead agency for this Initiative in Hawaii. The Initiative works with systems, such as the Department of Human Services, other service providers and partners with both the public and private sector to create and support transitioning foster youth to successfully move into adulthood and become a part of the community.

I support the intent of SB 2589 which extends medical coverage to former foster youth by automatic enrollment. Initiative sites across the nation have been and continue to be engaged in work with local and state agencies to extend Medicaid for former foster youth up to age 21 and beyond. The HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative supports the extension of Medicaid to former foster youth in Hawaii by automatic enrollment up to age 26.

As parents, medical coverage is something we consider a necessity for our children, even as they reach young adulthood and head off to college. Under the current Federal Affordable Health Care Act, parents have the opportunity to include their adult children on their medical plan up to age 26. Foster youth are wards of the state, and as such, should be provided the same parity as any parent who provides this basic necessity for their own children. By 2014, Hawaii will be required, under AHCA, to provide coverage for young adults who age out of foster care up to age 26.

A young person in the foster care system is at a higher risk for physical and mental health problems. They very often face issues of homelessness, underemployment and become parents at a young age without the support of caring adults. They have social workers to help them navigate health and mental health systems while they are in care, but once they age out, they are expected to continue to do so without adequate life experiences or the support of responsible adults. Many of them are unaware of or find it difficult to fill out an annual renewal application to receive medical coverage. In addition, this population is often transient, moving from home to home and the application will be sent to the last known address. Couple that with the fact that these young adults are not thinking about the importance of health care and why they need medical coverage until something happens and they really need it. Former foster youth who lack adequate health insurance cost states more because they put off preventative care and seek more expensive treatment in hospital emergency rooms. It is important to note that in Hawaii, the majority of these former foster youth are already eligible for coverage as young adults, but for reasons mentioned earlier, are unable to navigate the system and don't receive coverage or lose coverage. A recent survey showed that only 59% of former foster youth had any type of medical coverage compared to almost 90% of their peers in the community. We will continue, as an Initiative with these young people, to work with administration to determine the best method of enrolling and maintaining coverage (whether by automatic enrollment or otherwise) for these young adults so they get covered and do not lose coverage once they receive it.

The Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative supports the intent of SB 2589 which extends medical coverage to former foster youth up to age 26. It is our understanding that DHS Administration has already committed to and is in the process of doing this starting in 2012 (up to age 24), 2013 (up to age 25) and 2014 (up to age 26). If this bill does moves forward, it should be with amendments which reflect the intent of DHS to provide these services in a way that is supportive and most effective to this effort. Mahalo!



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To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, March 15, 2012
9am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Noy Worachit, Vice-President, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

Re: **Support the Intent of SB 2589, RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH**

Good Afternoon Senator Chun-Oakland and Members of the Committee,

My name is Noy Worachit and I am the Vice-President of the HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative.

I would like to support the intent of Senate Bill 2589 which extends medical coverage to former foster youth up to age 26. The HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative supports the extension of Medicaid to former foster youth in Hawaii by automatic enrollment up to age 26. The federal Affordable Health Care Act allows this extension for former foster youth up to age 26, but will not be in effect until 2014.

I aged out of care this past year and I did not receive help to apply for medical coverage and didn't have it for several months. It is important for me to have continued medical coverage, especially because I have a young child. Extended medical coverage and automatic enrollment would be one less thing I have to worry about. As a full time student and single parent, I do not have the time to fill out lengthy and complicated forms to be able to receive medical coverage every year. This is a barrier for most foster youth.

Young people in foster care have higher rates of serious emotional and behavioral problems, chronic physical disabilities, birth defects, developmental delays, and poor school achievement when compared to children from the same socioeconomic background, so it is important for them to receive the medical services they need when they age out of care and do not have support.

It is the understanding of the HI HOPES Youth Leadership Board that DHS Administration is already planning to extend medical coverage to youth aging out of care starting this year and we applaud these efforts. If this bill moves forward, it should be with amendments that support executing this plan quickly and effectively and a plan which assures that ALL young people who age out of foster care receive coverage and KEEP that coverage until age 26.

Thank you very much.



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To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, March 15, 2012
9am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Nellieshy Mamuad, Historian/Public Relations Chair (East Hawaii)**
HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board, Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

Re: **In Support of SB 2589, RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH**

My name is Nellieshy Mamuad and I am 23 years old. I am a member of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative HI H.O.P.E.S. Board in East Hawaii as well as a former foster youth. I would like to provide supportive testimony today for SB 2589, which provides extended (and originally automatically re-enrolled) Medicare benefits for all foster youth who have reached the age of majority until age 26.

Medical coverage is something that is vital for everyone, but even more so for the former foster youth population. 77% of former foster youth become pregnant by the age of 23. Another 24% have reported being homeless at least once. Of these youth, only 57% have medical coverage compared to 78% of their peers. So how does all of this tie into the need for extension and re-enrollment of Medicare benefits?

If a young person becomes pregnant and does not have medical coverage, they would not be able to receive and may be hesitant to even seek out the appropriate prenatal care, as well as being stuck with a very large bill upon giving birth to their child. Looking at homelessness, many youth who transition out of foster care have transient living situations and may not be able to receive or even retrieve their mail on a regular basis. This could cause them to miss re-enrollment deadlines, which leads to breaks in medical coverage or even losing their medical coverage all together.

My experience with medical coverage after foster care was a positive one. I was fortunate enough to have assistance from my social worker in applying for adult coverage in time to ensure a seamless transition. This is not the case for many of the 100+ foster youth who age out of care in the State of Hawaii each year.

By offering extended Medicare benefits with automatic re-enrollment to these youth, we would honestly just be affording them the equal opportunity already offered to their peers in the general population. A youth who turns 18 under the care of their parents has the option to stay under their medical coverage until they are 26 years old; for a former foster youth, the State of Hawaii is our parent so we should be given that option as well. The opportunity for adequate medical coverage shouldn't be a luxury or a privilege for only the fortunate few, it should be a right. Transitioning foster youth already have a world of adversities they are facing. Please aid us in relieving some of that pressure by addressing their need for medical benefits.

I support SB 2589. The HI HOPES board is grateful for the partnership of DHS in its efforts to extend medical coverage starting this year. Please assure that young people who age out of care have coverage and maintain that coverage until age 26. Thank you for your time and have a great day.



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To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, March 15, 2012
9am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Gernani Yutob, Jr., President, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

Re: **In Support of SB 2589, RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH**

Good Afternoon Senator Chun-Oakland and Members of the Committee,

My name is Gernani Yutob, Jr. and I am the president of the Oahu HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative. The Initiative is a national and local effort to create and support successful outcomes for transitioning foster youth.

I would like to submit testimony in support of SB 2589 which seeks to extend medical coverage to former foster youth by automatic enrollment. The HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative supports the extension of Medicaid to former foster youth in Hawaii by automatic enrollment up to age 26.

I aged out of foster care in Hawaii and will turn 22 this April. I currently reside with my former foster parents and have been fortunate to have my former foster mother assist me in filling out my applications for Med-Quest in the past. Other former foster youth are not as fortunate. They are not aware of their health care options and coverage status after they age out. The process of filling out these long applications every year can be overwhelming. Transitioning foster youth are also constantly on the move which makes it much difficult to renew application forms each year because they usually mail it to the last address the youth resided in. And to top it off, if the letter was not mailed back by the specified due date then the youth would lose medical coverage. It would be much easier if there was some sort of annual automatic enrollment for transitioning foster youth and to have the age increased to 26 with full coverage in contrast to the general population.

Since I am now 21, my medical benefits have decreased substantially and is now very limited. Last year, Med-Quest claimed they mailed a renewal application to my residence but I have not received it and was unaware of the procedures associated with it. Since I supposedly did not return the form, I was stripped of my medical benefits. Fortunately for me I was able to reapply and be eligible again but not without a four month wait. God-forbid, what if something terrible was to happen to me while I was uninsured during that period? The only way I am receiving full coverage now is through my employer but even that is difficult as well because I have to devote 20 hours weekly and at the same time manage my four classes for benefits. What if I was to lose my job or decide to focus more on school? On the contrary, not many foster youth have jobs or are able to work the 20 hours AND manage school at the same time so the chances of them obtaining coverage are slim. It would be much easier if there was some sort of annual automatic enrollment for transitioning foster youth and to have the age increased to 26 with full coverage in contrast to the general population.

On a national level, only 57% of former foster youth under 24 have health insurance, compared to 78% of their counterparts. A recent poll of former foster youth in Hawaii showed that only 59% of them had coverage compared to 90% of their peers. That means they are not accessing resources that may be available to them, even if they are eligible and need it. Studies show that former foster youth suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder at six times more than the general population and twice as much as returning war veterans. Proper health care is critical for transitioning foster youth because it supports positive physical, psychological and emotional health.

We extend our thanks to director Pat McManaman and DHS for their efforts to make sure that those who age out of foster care receive medical coverage up to age 26. Thank you for allowing me to testify my support for SB 2589.



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To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, March 15, 2012
9am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Tiffany "Ipo" Lynch-Ma'e, President, East Hawaii HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

Re: **In Support of SB 2589, RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH**

Welina mai kakou,

My name is Tiffany "Ipo" Lynch Ma'e, I am 22 years old and currently the President of the East Hawaii HI H.O.P.E.S Board with the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative. Today, I would like to present supportive testimony in regards to SB 2589, which calls for automatic enrollment for all youth who age out of care into medical and dental coverage up until the age of 26.

Health Care plays a vital role in the success and stability in not only Foster Youth, but, all youth. Youth who are not in care have the opportunity to remain on their biological parents medical up until age 26. Now, I'm all for equality, Foster Youth in many ways are all ready at a disadvantage, the State of Hawaii is our parents and I don't understand why there are still handfuls of us who are forced to live without medical coverage.

Like I said, I am 22 years old, I have yet to have my wisdom teeth removed and have certain health issues that go unattended, I don't have medical or dental. My story is far from unique I can scroll through my phone and find at least 13 youth who aged out of care who don't have medical or dental either. America is the only industrial country in the world that does not offer universal coverage. Now that's a different argument, but I can't help but think how much of an injustice we're doing to the next leaders of our Country. Oppression continues, inequality continues, why is it okay for a typical adolescent to receive health coverage beyond their teen years, but foster youth have to struggle and compete with other adults in the general population? Why are we not allowed to receive extended medical coverage from OUR parents?

Personally I feel that, out of all the struggles that youth who age out of care face, this is not only one of the easiest to fix, but one that would show the greatest positive results. My brothers and sisters who age out of care are six times more likely to suffer from post traumatic stress disorder than that of the general population, and twice as likely as returning war veterans, yet more than half of us do not receive the proper mental health services we need. When I'm in college, and can't go to class because I'm in pain or at free health clinics, only to get denied, I fail my course. Only 3 percent of youth who age out of care graduate with a 4-year degree. When I'm sick or in pain, I can't go to work. If I can't go to work, I can't pay my bills. 25% percent of youth who age out of care experience at least 1 day of homelessness by the age of 24. Everybody needs medical and dental, foster youth don't have mommy's to bring us soup, our mother tells us that it cost too much money to make sure we're healthy.

No offense sir or ma'am, but would you deny your child proper health coverage? The passing of this bill would allow Foster Youth to have one less thing to worry about. The passing of this bill will promote healthy living to me and my brothers and sisters. I'll bet my life on it that this bill will help decrease some of the negative statistics and stigmas that haunt all youth who aged out of Child Welfare Services.

We're not asking for much, just for you to think two things;

1. What would I do for my child? Would I allow my child to go without medical and dental? And
2. What if you didn't have medical?

Thank You For Your Time, Ipo Ma'e



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To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, March 15, 2012

Re: **In Support of SB 2589, RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH**

From: **Robyn Finai**
Member of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, **HI H.O.P.E.S Board and Former Foster Youth**

My name is Robyn Finai and I am a member of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative's HI H.O.P.E.S. Board. We provide support, awareness, opportunity, and help pave the path for future and transitional foster youth.

I would like to extend my support for SB 2589 which will provide aged out foster youth with Medicaid as well as extending their coverage to the age of 26. I also support providing medical coverage by automatic enrollment.

When Obama took Office he had passed the law that allows parents to cover their children under their medical health insurance up to the age of 26. This being said I believe, with the State of Hawaii being the Legal Guardian of foster youth in Hawaii, we should have the same opportunity.

Transitional foster youth are also at higher risk of chronic health problem, mental illness as well as psychiatric disorders. Therefore, the need for Medical Coverage is imperative. Youth coming of age will not be able to afford this kind of care.

I am respectfully asking the committee to pass SB 2589 to help support transitioning foster youth and automatically enrolling them in Medicaid until they reach the age of 26.

Thank You

To: Representative John M. Mizuno and the Committee on Human Services
From: Alyssa Chu, Master's of Social Work student at University of Hawaii at Manoa
Re: Senate Bill 2589
Hearing Date: Thursday March 15, 2012 9:00 a.m.

Good morning Representative Mizuno and members of the Committee on Human Services. My name is Alyssa Chu, I am a student at the University of Hawaii's Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work. I am testifying in support of SB 2589 which seeks to enroll former foster youth into appropriate medical coverage programs and to automatically re-enroll those youth until the age of 26.

An article written by the United States Department of Labor addressed three reasons why young adults need better access to medical coverage.

- 1) The highest rate of uninsured individuals lies within the young adult population.
- 2) Employer-based insurance coverage is least accessible to young adults who typically transition into the job market at entry-level or part-time positions.
- 3) One in six young adults has a chronic illness.

Within the young adult population, former foster youth are at greater risk for mental health problems than their peers. Experts have estimated that up to 80% of children in foster care have significant mental health issues as compared to 18-22% of children in the general population. The need for former foster youth to have medical insurance is evident.

The Affordable Care Act has allowed young adults to be covered by their parents medical insurance until the age of 26. I am 24 years old and am covered by my parents medical insurance. This extension of medical coverage has allowed me to go back to school to pursue a master's degree in Social Work without the anxiety of paying out of pocket medical expenses. The passage of this bill would extend the same security that I have been granted to former foster youth, and would ease one of the many burdens faced during their transition into young adulthood.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Alyssa Chu

March 13, 2012, 9:00am, House Conference Room 329

To: House Committee on Human Services
Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
Representative Jo Jordan, Vice Chair

From: University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Master's of Social Work
Tia Ikeno

Re: SB2589 RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH

In Support

Chairs & Committee Members:

I, Tia Ikeno, support SB2589 because I believe foster youth have the right to know that even after aging out of the system they are allowed to re-enroll to receive medical coverage. Having this extended medical coverage can be a positive outcome for many foster youth especially if they have mental health issues, are pregnant, or even when they have an emergency. Many foster youth already struggle when they age out of the system. As wards of the State, it is the State's responsibility to tell these foster youth about all the opportunities that are out there for them, once they age out of the system, so they do not feel like they have been abandoned once again.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.