

Senate committee passes True Up legislation

SB 213 gives foster youth needed information to make good decisions, youth testify

In a victory for foster youth rights, the Senate Health and Welfare Committee has unanimously approved legislation that would give foster youth more time and information to decide about continuing their education and state-sponsored support.

Senate Bill 213, sponsored by Sen. Ken Winters, R-Murray, won the committees' approval on March 14 and now goes to the Senate. The bill would extend the window for foster youth to petition the court to continue in state care from six months to one year following the youth's 18th birthday.

The bill also better ensures that foster care youth understand their choices at age 18, have adequate opportunity to access the transitional living support services, and are able to initiate the process themselves.

Chelsea Hoover, a member of the True Up's Youth Advisory Council, and Dr. Eugene Foster, True Up executive director, spoke passionately about how foster youth need additional support to successfully transition to independent living.

Hoover, a 19-year-old student at Jefferson Community and Technical College, told committee members that she missed the deadline to continue with state supported-care and has struggled to make the transition on her own. She told committee members that she didn't get the information and support she needed from state social workers.

Foster said the added support that many foster youth need to continue their education and become independent is a smart investment for Kentucky. The committee's chairwoman, Sen. Julie Denton of Louisville, agreed. "It makes sense," Denton said. "It's such an investment in our children who have been in state care."

You can help provide support for SB 213 by contacting your state senator and representative today and asking them to pass this important legislation. Go to www.lrc.ky.gov to find contact information for your lawmaker.

Read more about the Senate committee meeting online:

Courier-Journal story

<http://www.courier-journal.com/article/20120314/NEWS01/303140071/-1/7daysarchives/Senate-panel-backs-foster-care-transition-bill>

Herald-Leader story

<http://www.kentucky.com/2012/03/14/2109910/senate-committee-approves-bill.html>