

House Workforce & Higher Education Committee
Proponent Testimony on Substitute House Bill 25
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Franklin County Youth Advisory Board
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Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Substitute House Bill 25. My name is Alivia. I serve as the Vice President of our Youth Advisory Board in Columbus, and I am here today to share what school was like for me while I was in foster care.

I dropped out of high school during the last few weeks of my senior year back in 2023, and one of my main reasons I dropped out was because I was so far behind with my credits and didn't have any motivation to finish or even to try and catch up, considering it was my senior year and I was missing more than half the credits I needed to graduate.

Throughout my foster care experience, I had went to over seven or eight high schools, and it caused me to be very behind or delayed academically. Not every foster home I went to had me go to school, which would sometimes be between 30 days or even three months before I would start schooling again.

I never had a homeschool like most people, because I was never in one school for a long period of time to make connections or friends with my peers because I never knew when it would be my last day at said school.

I never had motivation for school. That doesn't mean that it was the same way for education. I had plenty of support getting my education, and in high school, it didn't feel like support for me. It felt like I was being put on a pedestal and forced to meet the expectations of all the adults around me, which caused me to struggle and lack motivation even more.

Please don't get me wrong, I love to learn and this year I'm allowing myself to get back into school and get my GED, and I aspire to someday be an agriculturalist and have a farm with animals to contribute to my community.

If something like this had been in place for me—if someone had been responsible for making sure I stayed enrolled, that my credits followed me, and that I wasn't sitting out of school for weeks—I believe I would have had a real chance to graduate on time.

That is why I urge you to pass Substitute House Bill 25. Thank you for your time and for taking foster students' education seriously. I am happy to answer any questions.