

The Columbus Dispatch

Letter to the Editor: Thank you, Governor, for standing by foster youth

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The OHIO Youth Advisory Board and ACTION Ohio serve as the statewide voices of foster care youth and alumni. We read over the Initial Findings Report by the Governor's Office of Children Services Transformation with interest.

We are deeply grateful to Gov. Mike DeWine for the continued commitment he demonstrates in caring about foster youth and elevating the voices of youth and alumni by including our voices in these initiatives.

Testimony by our members during the recent foster care forums reflected the top three priorities that we as the firsthand consumers of foster care have identified: the creation of Foster Youth Ombudsman's Office, better independent living and normalcy practices, and preserving sibling connections.

These priorities directly impact the immediate experiences, long-term outcomes and emotional well-being of young people.

As the council works toward making its final recommendations, it is our hope that all who bear this great responsibility continue to uphold the work that Governor DeWine has long championed – ensuring that voices of youth and alumni are not overlooked.

Lisa Dickson, Westerville

One sentence was omitted by the paper for brevity:

The definition of "transformation" is a thorough and dramatic change. We believe in Ohio's capability to achieve metamorphosis and move beyond business as usual.