

Good afternoon,

**I would like to first offer my sincere thanks** and signature sunflowers to Governor Dewine and his Representatives for such great compassion for our foster care community and foster care outcomes and also thank you to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services as well as the Office of Children Services Transformation for taking the time to listen to the experiences and solutions that our foster care youth and alum have recommended it is such an honor to be joined in with everyone.

**My name is Jaye Turner, and I am a former foster youth.** I serve on the leadership team of Action, Ohio, an organization that has done some fantastic work to improve foster care outcomes. I am also the proud founder and executive director of an organization named El'lesun, which has been created to advocate for and serve our foster care community as a whole.

**I want to share how important it is to prepare teens for adulthood.** When a teen ages out of care they often lack the life skills they need to thrive as a young adult such as basic home economics, cooking, cleaning, budgeting, filling out resumes, college resources, navigating the city through public transportation, and knowing the support for public assistance and health care that's available to them. Youth expressed when going to their caseworker or foster parent for the resources they don't have them and because of this

**We are asking that there be mandatory independent living training tracks** for every caseworker and foster parent who serve our teens. With this training track, we know that every caseworker and foster parent will be more equipped to help educate our teens for a better outcome in adulthood.

**Foster care should more than just a place to stay** but be a place to connect, educate, and grow. We recommend that the training tracks be designed by current and former foster care youth because of our knowledge and experience in the lack of resources our caseworkers and foster parents don't have.

**We know that our foster alums will do an excellent job** at writing and leading these independent living trainings because they will include the voices of our youth in care.

**Mandatory training tracks must happen** because no matter what the current circumstances are, every teenager in care deserves to be positioned to have a successful adulthood.

Blessings,

*Jaye Turner*