

# **HB 6666 AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO IDENTITY DOCUMENTS BY HOMELESS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS**

## **Public Health Committee**

**March 29, 2021**

My name is Tania Banks. I am 25 years old and a Hartford resident. I was experiencing homelessness last year during my pregnancy. I also have two little girls. I have been part of the YOUTH S.P.E.A.K.S. (Supporting Policies and Enriching Any Kind of Services) group at the Center for Children's Advocacy. We advocate on issues affecting youth and young adults who are homeless.

Many homeless youth and young adults are not staying in shelters. Now, COVID-19 makes the homeless situation even worse. Not only is it hard to get into a shelter but it's also hard to stay with friends. Youth are staying everywhere they can. Many of us do not have a certified copy of our birth certificates because either we left them where we were living or we lost them when we became homeless. A birth certificate is needed to get a State ID, which is necessary to get a job; but also for open opportunities to benefits (like SNAP and HUSKY), school, career training, housing, driver's license, permit, and other things.

To get out of homelessness we need our documents and that comes with a cost. The fee waiver to get a certified copy of the birth certificate as well as to get a State ID in sections 70-72 of this bill will help us to move forward with our lives in a productive way- we can bring back to the community when we're working. At the same time, this brings hope back to the young people who feel like they have nowhere to turn. We just want to take the first step of becoming free from homelessness.