

February 18, 2021

Greetings members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Quatatjia H. I am receiving housing and case management services from The Connection Start program which is funded through the Homeless Youth Line Item.

I entered DCF care at the age of 12 and lived in four different homes in five years. In December 2019, I began couch surfing and really struggling, not having a place that I could reliably stay. I would often stay with different family or friends but felt the pressure to switch often so I would not become a burden. In the past year, I have stayed in twenty-five places and five of those places were 30 days before being housed.

When I was connected to the Start program, I was very anxious to begin the process since I didn't know where I would be staying. My case manager worked with me to find an apartment that was willing to give me a chance. I am truly blessed for the assistance and excited to start creating memories in my own space.

Now that I have stable housing, my plans are to get a job and be reunified with my daughter, goals that were not on the forefront of my mind when I was constantly trying to figure out where I'd be sleeping each and every night. I have a job interview next week at Burger King and I hope to get my daughter back in the next few months. Fingers crossed.

This funding in the state budget has helped me and a bunch of other struggling young people a lot. I appreciate that this committee has consistently protected the funds that make these programs possible. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Quatatjia H, Waterbury