

House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services						
Testimony - HB21-1094 Foster Youth In Transition Program						
First Name	Last Name	Position	Representing	Testifying	Text of Testimony	Registered
Kristin	Melton	For	Colorado Dept of Human Services	In Person		3/16/2021 13:10
Benjamin	Waters	For	Fostering Colorado	In Person		3/16/2021 14:06
Trevor	Williams	For	Colorado Dept of Human Services	In Person		3/16/2021 12:41
Minna	Castillo-Cohen	Amend	Colorado Dept of Human Services	In Person		3/16/2021 12:49
Stephanie	Villafuerte	For	The Office of Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman	Remotely		3/10/2021 8:43
Betsy	Fordyce	For	Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center	Remotely		3/12/2021 16:17
Viviana	Cervantes	For	Self	Remotely		3/12/2021 16:26
Alexander	Miller	For	Self	Remotely		3/12/2021 16:29
Jennifer	Collins	Amend	City & County of Denver	Remotely		3/15/2021 19:01
Ashley	Chase	For	Colorado Office of the Child's Representative	Remotely		3/15/2021 9:13
Kristin	Toombs	Questions Only	Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Initiatives	Remotely		3/16/2021 13:40
Kippi	Clausen	For	Colorado Rural Collaborative for Homeless Youth	Remotely		3/16/2021 12:36
Thomas	Perille	For	Democrats for Life of Colorado	Remotely		3/16/2021 12:50
					<p>_x000D_</p> <p>Every year hundreds of youth exit Colorado's foster care system because of their age. This provides both a challenge and opportunity. The challenge is to create a transitional environment with the proper array of safety net programs that ensures these young men and women have the resources to succeed. The opportunity is to prevent these young Coloradans who are disadvantaged by their early life circumstances from falling into a life of unrealized educational and career goals, financial insecurity, mental health/substance abuse challenges and long-term dependence. _x000D_</p> <p>_x000D_</p> <p>For normal teens, the transition to adulthood can be fraught despite the emotional and financial support of their parents. For foster teens "aging out" of foster care, the transition to adulthood is exponentially more challenging. They are commonly dealing with a "history of neglect, abuse, trauma, disrupted attachments, unstable housing, multiple placements, fragmented schooling, disrupted social networks, poverty, and gestational exposures" to drugs and alcohol.(1) It is not surprising that teens in foster care experience more anxiety/depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and behavioral and conduct problems.(2) An astounding 40-47% of youth in foster care have a documented disability.(3) And up to 80% have developmental, behavioral or mental health concerns.(1)_x000D_</p> <p>The youth who leave Colorado's foster care program because of "emancipation", through no fault of their own, are dramatically disadvantaged. The disadvantage is magnified by the overrepresentation of people of color in the foster care population.(2) It is incumbent on the people of Colorado to give these teens and young adults an equal opportunity in life as their non-foster care peers. This means implementing evidence-based best practices through new legislative initiatives. The legislative programs should promote "strength based" approaches and "resilience" orientations. (1) It should encourage mentoring relationships. It must target social support through housing programs, education advancement, job/living skills training, financial literacy, healthcare, and mental health services. HB21-1094 is such a program. _x000D_</p> <p>HB21-1094 helps meet the needs of at-risk foster care teens and young adults transitioning to adulthood. I strongly encourage you to support HB21-1094. _x000D_</p> <p>_x000D_</p> <p>Thomas J. Perille MD FACP FHM _x000D_</p> <p>President, Democrats for Life of Colorado _x000D_</p> <p>_x000D_</p> <p>References available on request. _x000D_</p> <p>_x000D_</p>	
Thomas	Perille	For	Democrats for Life of Colorado	Submitted text		3/16/2021 14:26