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Judiciary Committee Public Hearing

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My name is Robin Montstream and I am here as a parent interested in regaining parental control. I am concerned the current laws enable teens making bad choices the option of leaving their homes to the detriment of their own well being.

Two years ago, my then 16 year old son Ryan began hanging out with the wrong crowd. These kids lack the very basic in parental supervision. Ryan had rules, curfews and consequences for his actions. Then one day Ryan decided he didn't want to come home from a graduation celebration at the time he was given for curfew. He decided he no longer wanted to live by any of the rules established in his best interest, he left home. I contacted the state police to see what I could do to get him back home. I was informed there was nothing I could do. I was told at the age of 16 he was free to make decisions that he clearly was not mature enough to make at this time in his life. He was acting out, rebelling and there was nothing I could do. Yet I was legally responsible for him and his actions while living under the roof of a family I do not share the same moral values with. I had many sleepless nights wondering where he was, who he was with, what was he doing. The commitment I made as a parent to protect him was compromised.

Then one day in August 2005, I received a phone call from a resident state trooper informing me he had Ryan and was on his way to my home. When they arrived, Ryan was sobbing. He had been caught shoplifting. After some discussion the trooper asked me what he should do with Ryan. I said enough was enough and that Ryan was coming home. Ryan became very angry and refused to come home. The trooper communicated there was nothing he could do, he couldn't force Ryan to come home. He put Ryan in the car and drove him back to the home without rules, curfews and accountability. Several weeks later, I received a letter from the store where he was caught shoplifting demanding financial restitution for Ryan's actions.

This is one of many situations I found myself in during that period when Ryan was 16 to 18. It's the time I believe Ryan was lost due to his immaturity and inability to truly know what was best for him. I would like to believe as Ryan's

mother I did know what was best for him. Like all children he needed boundaries as the roots took hold and until the time came for his wings. I wish I had the support I needed to make that happen. The current law did not provide me with that support.

Ryan will be 19 this month and struggles to put his life in order. He talks about all the goals and dreams he had written down on an index card at the age of 5. Playing football, going to college and flying planes in the armed forces, just to name a few. Unfortunately, due to the decisions and choices he was allowed to make during this critical phase of his life he did not finish high school which will carry a life long burden.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

Robin Montstream
Tolland, CT