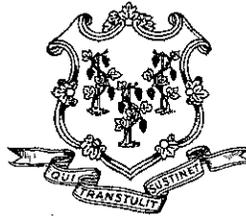


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February 14, 2013

Good Morning Sen. Bartolomeo, Rep. Urban and members of the Children Committee. I am here to testify in support of SB 273, AN ACT CONCERNING FOSTER CHILDREN AND INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.

This bill, which is similar to legislation passed in California, would assist foster children who are, until the age of majority, in the custody of the Commissioner of Children and Families and placed in foster care. This legislation would give preference to qualified applicants, who have been dependent children in foster care, in hiring for or placement in internships with state agencies. This provision, similar to the preference given to veterans in certain employment situations, will allow certain foster children to gain applied work experience which will assist them in successfully seeking employment.

This is a small change with no fiscal impact but it would assist young adults who often face a challenging path. In fact, the January issue of *State Legislatures* magazine cites a recent study which found that nationally 63% of former foster children do not earn a high school diploma or GED, 24% have no earned income in the first two years after leaving foster care and by age 19, 30% of the young male former foster children are incarcerated. These are children who need our help. Thank you for considering this important legislation.