

**Testimony Regarding  
DCF Services to Prepare Youth Aging Out of State Care  
Program Review and Investigations Committee  
October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013**

**Submitted by: Russell P. Sylvia**

Senator Kissel, Representative Mushinsky, and distinguished members of the Program Review and Investigations Committee:

My name is Russell P. Sylvia, I'm a 22 year old senior attending Mitchell College in New London, CT majoring in Psychology with hopes to find a career in Human Resources. I have been in care since November of 2006, and today I stand before you to today testify about DCF services to prepare youth aging out of State care.

As I prepare to graduate in May with my Bachelor's Degree, I prepare for my future. I also prepare to exit from DCF care and begin a life on my own. This will be will a very difficult time for me. For me, I'm not worried about aging out and having to support myself, but rather saying goodbye to the ones who helped me get to where I am today. I believe with my whole heart, without the support from my worker and DCF, I wouldn't be half the man, you see standing before you. DCF has given so many opportunities I may not have had.

DCF has been a huge part of my life for so long, and aging out for me is not as scary as it used to be. I feel confident that the life that awaits me will be rewarding and successful. Thanks to the Life-Skills classes, Case Reviews, and Youth Advisory Boards, I feel good about my future. My DCF worker and I have talked a great deal about my future and creating plans along the way to ensure my success. For those of you who don't already know, I will be moving to Boston in August, where a position at Tiffany and Co is waiting for me. Working as a Sales Professional at Tiffany's is truly a dream come true for me. Tiffany's is one of my favorite places in the world, and knowing I have a future there is the most beautiful feeling. Without the love, support and dedication from DCF and my workers, both past and present, I don't think these doors would have opened. I owe everything to them. I especially owe a special "Thank You" to Commissioner Kattz. She's been such a big support for me, and the interest she takes in our lives is truly inspiring.

I know the future is scary for a lot of people, even adults, but one of the lessons DCF has taught me is that everything will always work out. You have to make it work. If you want something in life, you do everything you can to ensure you're

successful in all your endeavors. DCF taught me to be a successful adult and a wonderful person. Being DCF's Willimantic's President of their Youth Advisory Board for the last 3 years has opened my eyes to a world of possibilities, I've met so many amazing people and have accomplished so much for the youth in DCF care.

As I think about the future, and the wonderful life I have to opportunity to have, I know every time I succeed, every time I make a dream come true, every time I follow my heart, I'll smile and think back to DCF and know I've made them proud of the person I'll become.

Thank You.