Testimony of Tisheana Burton

Re: Raised Bill ~~211~~ 112

March 2, 2016

My name is Tisheana Burton I am a senior at Western Connecticut State University and single mother of three children 16y.o., 12y.o., and 8 y. o. I grew up on West Side of Stamford in the projects on Fairfield Ave. I was fifteen years old when I met my daughter's father who was one of the neighborhood drug dealers. Eventually, he was arrested for selling drugs three days after his arrest I found out I was pregnant with my oldest daughter. My daughter was 10 months old when he was released from prison. Two month later he was murdered, nine day after her first birthday to be exact. At the age of 21 I decided to go to Norwalk Community College to better educate myself so that my children can have an opportunity to a better future. After two semesters I dropped out I didn't not have childcare. And because I did not work my options were limited. Unfortunately for myself and so many other parent students there is not enough support to encourage them to continue their education. In 2009, I went back to NCC only to be faced with the same problem again no childcare. I refused to let it stop me it took me 4years to obtain my Associate Degree. I am Justice and Law Administrative student my concentration is Legal Studies my desire is to continue on to Law School. I was given an opportunity that any student would be in awe of. To intern with an Attorney in Bronx NY I was expected to be in court by 9am but my son couldn't go to school until 8:30am. I wasn't able to fully dedicate myself, because again no childcare. It would be very helpful if my son could attend an afterschool program most of the schools in Stamford offer an early morning program. Most of my classes are offered at night my mother is a great help to me but she work fulltime so even that can be challenging. At times I feel alone and helpless I feel like my best is not good enough and in those moment when I have to miss class because there has been a 90 minute delay or there is no school for public schools because it a holiday that is not recognized by my school. I want to quit and go get a regular job. I have taken several lost due to a lack of childcare. I take them with pride because I know my children come first and that is the price I have to pay as a single mother. There are a few professors who are not compassionate when it comes to parent students they are strict and stick to the rules. So you hope and pray that no test or quizzes land on a day where there is no school. I have cried so many night but I continue to tell myself you have to keep pushing it will all pay off one day. I never understood how taking classes at social services that only prepare you to work a minimum wage job, or working for $9.75 per hour can take precedent over Higher Education. A job that will require me to pay higher taxes in which the funds will be disbursed into services that were never afforded to me. This is my story, my life has been challenging, I am presented with many hurdles every day my goal is to overcome them all. I know it starts with good valid education it will provide me with an opportunity to overcome the barriers of poverty.