



Housing as a Platform for Economic Self-Sufficiency for Youth Leaving Foster Care

A Discussion with The Honorable Ben Carson, Secretary of the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development

March 4, 2019 1:30 – 2:30 PM

PARTICIPANTS

Roman Sandhu is a current foster youth and statewide officer of the *Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advisory Board*. The Board exists to be the statewide voice of foster care youth, ages 14-24. In his role as Treasurer, Roman traveled to DC last year to accept the *Angels in Adoption* award on behalf of the OHIO YAB, as per Senator Rob Portman's nomination.

Tajanae Martin, OHIO YAB contributed to the national petition: "[A Plea for Adequate Housing for Transitioning Foster Youth and Alumni](#)" which has led to over 54,000 signatures. She is enrolled in college, actively involved in her local youth advisory board, and one of her life goals is to be an advocate for vulnerable and at-risk youth.

Joshua Hatch is a former foster youth and President of the Black Student Union at Wright State. His accomplishments include being chosen as a national FosterClub All Star, Wright State University Admissions Ambassador, and recent recipient of acceptance into the Poland Ambassadors Study Abroad program.

Kimberly Coronel is a member of the California Youth Commission, a sophomore at Cal State San Bernardino, a Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commissioner, and a former foster youth who was placed in foster care at age four.

Justin Abbasi spent seven years in the South Carolina foster care system. Currently, he advocates for his peers who are experiencing foster care by making recommendations for changes in policy and practice. Justin is a member of the National Foster Youth & Alumni Policy Council and also works with FosterClub, the national network for youth in foster care.

Tatyana Rozhenova is a former foster youth and leader within the Ohio Youth Advisory Board. She works at Opportunities Knocking Transitional Living Program in Cincinnati, OH which provides hands on experiences and

opportunities for young adults such as job readiness preparation, higher education assistance, learning instruments, banking coaching and more.

Sean Hughes is a former a Congressional staffer who helped to draft and enact the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. Following his decade on Capitol Hill, Sean served as Director of Congressional Affairs for the Child Welfare League of America for several years. Currently, Sean works as a consultant to support a broad range of advocacy organizations, public agencies, direct service providers, and philanthropic foundations across the country in maximizing their impact and providing policy and program leadership to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, youth and families.

Michael Outrich is a former foster youth who facilitated youth engagement for the Franklin County *Community Shelter Board's* efforts to develop a Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness. During his time in college at Ohio University in Athens, Michael started a campus program to help foster care alumni succeed in higher education.

Kierra Williams is a former foster youth and was a founding member of the OHIO Youth Advisory Board back in 2006. Kierra is a graduate of Miami University, and currently works as a Leadership Development Facilitator and a Youth Coach/Trainer.

Jamole Callahan is a former foster youth and a statewide trainer through the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program. Jamole's roles include serving as a mentor, speaker, motivator, and consultant. He heads up Training and Development for ACTION Ohio. Jamole is also a proud father and husband.

Doris Edelmann is a tireless ally of foster care youth and alumni. She serves as co-facilitator of the OHIO Youth Advisory Board, and Legislative Chair for ACTION Ohio (Alumni of Care Together Improving Outcomes Now).

Vanessa Hernandez currently serves as California Youth Connection's Director of Statewide Policy. Vanessa is responsible for shepherding the organization's legislative package to actualization while developing youth into leaders who harness the power of their voices and experiences. Before working for CYC, Vanessa worked for Riverside Department of Social Services where she worked alongside extended foster care youth, social workers and local policy makers. In that role, she helped implement extended foster care, supported transition age youth, developed trainings for child welfare professionals, mentored youth and collaborated on designing county-wide system improvement plans.

Dan Hare serves as legislative staff to Congressman Mike Turner (R-OH-10). He has worked in this capacity since September 2015 and covers a broad, non-defense issue portfolio, including housing. In this role, Dan has been the lead staffer for Congressman Turner's *Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities* (FSHO) Act, since its inception during the 114th Congress. Congressman Turner and Dan worked closely with foster youth advocates to design the policy behind FSHO

consistent with youth ideas. Prior to joining Congressman Turner's office, Dan held several positions in the legal field.

Lauren Behsudi is a public policy advisor at Casey Family Programs. In this role since 2010, Lauren supports the foundation's efforts to inform and educate federal and state policymakers about the need for practice and funding strategies that support efforts to improve outcomes among children and families. She also supports the foundation's efforts to improve child welfare policy in states across the country. Lauren is a graduate of Miami University in Ohio. She lives with son and husband in the Washington, DC area.

Ruth White co-founder and Executive Director of the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare and the former director of Housing and Homelessness for the Child Welfare League of America. As a lead advocate and trainer for HUD's Family Unification Program, Ruth helped develop and implement the concept for HUD's FUP-FSS demonstration program for youth.