

Testimony on Foster Teen Program

Good morning,

My name is Barbara Brody, and I am the Executive Director of the Vermont Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association. I am also a licensed Driver Education Teacher through the Agency and Education and the Department of Motor Vehicles. I have been teaching in Vermont since 1979. During that time I have taught Driver Education in 3 different High Schools and at the Essex Center for Technology. I have a master's degree in educational leadership, and I attended a Doctorate Program at the University of MN.

I thought since it is Valentine's Day instead of Chocolates, I brought Match Box cars for you to enjoy as you are the Transportation Committee.

I am here to talk to you about two items. The Teen Foster Driver Education Program and Driver Education Teacher Licensing.

First: The Teen and Young Adult Foster Program.

In FY 22 38% of youths 16-23 who also accessed the Youth Development Program had their drivers' license. This total represents 147 youths. This means that another 62% of Foster Youths have not been served. There are around 650 youths in this state in the Foster or Youth Development Program.

Most Foster Youths have dropped out of school and therefore cannot access Driver Education in the Public School and many areas do not have Private Driving Schools to help with this.

If Children and Families would be able to purchase a vehicle and the equipment necessary for the vehicle to be a Driver Education vehicle then they could bring that car to county to county to serve our Foster Youths. There are teachers available to teach but do not have access to a vehicle. They cannot use their DE vehicle from their school, because the insurance only covers students enrolled in the school.

The first class I taught at Youth Spectrum had most students living in the homeless shelter on North Ave. Getting these students, a license, allows them to find employment that may be outside the Burlington area is critical to the student leading a productive life.

Once they receive a license Good News Garage helps them purchase a used vehicle that they repaired and inspected. Every year Good News Garage donates 200 cars that are donated to needed individuals and families.

Once Children and Family purchases the vehicle it would be used only to help the Foster Youths receive Driver Education. After 5 years they would use this vehicle to trade in for a newer vehicle as DMV requires DE schools to have a vehicle no older than 5 years. It is my hope that this state legislature allocate funds so DCF can purchase a Driver Education Vehicle.

With me is Leslie Schwartz, the Director of Youth Development at Youth Spectrum. She has some testimony to share with you.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully

Barbara Brody