

Hi my name is Jayden and I've been homeless on and off for about year and a half. Through this journey I've also struggled with some mental health. Due to my mental health history this has put road blocks in the way of me getting into a long-term placement. Youth shelters have provided me with a safe and secure place to stay in addition to necessities like hot food, access to hygiene, and warm shelter to sleep. This bill is so important because it would help so many more youth who are in such need and desire to access these necessary organizations.

Extending the 30 consecutive days to 90 would provide much more time and assurance to find a safe place to stay. A lot of youth like me are new to the area and 30 days is just simply not enough to know your surroundings and build safe connections in order to find a safe place to stay when the 30 consecutive days is up. 90 days would provide us with more thoughtful and safe decision making in where to stay that night out.

Section 3 of this bill is really important to me. Changing it to contacting guardians after 30 days is a much needed updated policy. According to dosomething.org "A 2002 report on sexual abuse among adolescent runaways, prepared for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that 21-40% of homeless youth had been sexually abused compared to 1-3% of the general youth population." This fact is undeniably sad and heart breaking. This policy would provide youth to go to a shelter and have a sense of temporary safety until appropriate agencies or supports can help.