**Submitted Written Testimony for HF 1412 (Pierson)**

Thank you Chair and Committee for hearing my testimony. I appreciate everything you are doing for the children in the foster care community. My name is Nicholas Van Denburgh, and I was adopted from foster care in Hennepin County in 1999. My mother has continued to provide foster care for many children for the past 18 years in Anoka County. My concern is HF 1412.

My mom has been doing foster care for 18 years and throughout the years we’ve had kids come and go with major struggles and trauma that’s happened in their life. One in particular that we had for almost four years just left in November was a tough one. She had a hard time transitioning from one staff to another, one school to another. She would get so used to seeing the same people, then a new person would be hard, since she couldn’t take change very well. That would take a toll on our lives, because then we had to go out of our way to make sure she would get on the bus without attacking us. She was very aggressive and hit me too many times to count in the years she lived here. As a foster home, we cannot restrain children. So it was really hard to deal with the violent outbursts. I would help with laundry and she wore a size 5 and was 9 years old. So this little kid could hurt me at 5’11” and 165#s. It was hard.

I know you want to help homes. She had services. Lots of them. But there were no respite homes that would take her. There were no crisis homes that would take her. We tried for months to keep her. We didn’t want to send her away, but she was too dangerous. It is admirable to want to provide services to our home, but how is this going to work? My mom says that five years ago a foster home would not have been asked to care for her. She would have always lived in a group home or a treatment center.

She’s not the only super aggressive kid we’ve had lately. Every single one seems to repeatedly attack us in our home.

I would strongly urge you to make the foster care system better for foster parents and the foster kids by adding money to the basic rate. My mom talks about this a lot. When we are expected to take care of a 9 year old for $22.03 a day and provide all of her food, clothing, transportation, housing, just everything, that amount doesn’t cover it all. Then she is dangerous and needing meetings all of the time with all of her providers, and the daily rate doesn’t cover it. My mom wouldn’t be expected to care for a daycare child at only $22.03 a day. Why does she have to do that with a foster child?

Thank you for your time,

Nicholas Van Denburgh, Oak Grove, MN