

Testimony of Hilary Anderson

House Health and Human Services Committee, HB 2600

February 11, 2016

Hello, I am Hilary Anderson and up until October of 2015, I was a client of the Division of Children and Family Services. I was on and off the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and the Food Assistance program starting from around 2009. Back then, I wouldn't have had much to say about DCF but now I have nothing but wonderful things to say about them and can't imagine how I ever would be where I am today, without the help of DCF.

In May 2015, I met the woman who was going to be my case worker or as they now say, Career Navigator. Her name is Elsy Berry and she seemed nice enough, though I never thought for a second that she would be the person that would change my life. I guess you could say that I didn't have much faith in anyone to really want to help me and I wasn't sure if I really deserved the help. I guess you could say I didn't have much faith in me, either. It was not the first time I have been on assistance at DCF and I didn't figure it would be the last. When I met Elsy, I was living somewhere I really didn't want to be. It was not a good environment for my kids or myself. I was in this on and off again horribly abusive, dysfunctional relationship with the father of my two daughters, that I was raising with no support, no money and no self-esteem. I had no car, no home and absolutely no money so I needed my DCF assistance and that is why when Elsy Berry asked me what was going on in my life I would say nothing, I would lie. Soon after that, things got even worse for me and I finally broke down and told her everything that was going on and I had no idea that telling her would change everything for the better.

Elsy Berry and The Division of Children and Family Services helped me one by one with every barrier I had along the way. It was such an amazing feeling to have not only Elsy but a whole group of people behind me, supporting me and believing in me. It inspired me to wake up and stop being a victim and start doing something to change my life. I do not define success by how much money I make but by how well I do something that I love to do.