

## Testimony of Lucy Ross

Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee, SB 372

February 1, 2016

Hello my name is Lucy Ross.

In 2012 I became homeless, sleeping in cars or staying at a friend's house. I had a 3 yr old daughter. Every day I made it a new adventure so she didn't question why we didn't have a home and that she didn't feel different from the other kids. It was a huge pride thing for me. I didn't want to go to a shelter because of stories I had heard. Once winter came and it got cold, I had to swallow my pride. I went to a shelter in KCK. That didn't work out the way I would have wanted. So I had a friend of the family that lived in Lawrence and she volunteered for us to stay with her. That didn't last very long. I have to thank her though because it brought me to Lawrence.

In Dec 2012 I applied for benefits at DCF. I found I was pregnant. I was sent to Jennie's Work program. She's awesome! She helped me with my resume, prepare for interviews, my attire and she could tell that I was determined. Even though I was pregnant, I was still determined to get out of the shelter and out on my own and provide for my family. Being at Jennie's Work Program and my 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester, it became more difficult. I tried to not let that show by still showing up and being on time and doing what was expected of me.

May 2013 the shelter helped me get my own apartment. I was there for 1-2 years. After awhile it was getting dangerous for me and my children. I was maintaining a job and child care. My Pontiac at that time was giving me problems. While at this job, I discovered health issues and my gallbladder had to be removed. I lost my job, my car, and everything in March 2015. I walked everywhere because I didn't have any money for the bus. I made it another adventure for my children. At that time I applied for cash assistance, but before I was approved I pawned my TV, VCR and old cell phone so that we could have money. So then once I was approved for cash assistance, I was referred to Jennie's work Program and able to reconnect with Jennie again as well as meeting Sheila Wilson, my caseworker.

Summer of 2015 we had a home, but no car. At this time we were taking the bus. Sheila helped me get into a safer apartment in August 2015. I basically moved all my things on the bus. My daycare provider noticed my determination and let me borrow her car so I could get the toddler beds and other things for my kids that I couldn't get on the bus so that we could have a comfortable first night in our new place.

I was able to get a job September 8<sup>th</sup> but the bus schedule didn't work so I could get my kids to school and to work on time. Once I was approved for the job, Sheila made sure that I got a car before the job started. I've been on the job since then and I love this job! I love the job and the people. They are very understanding, in fact I was given this time off to come here today.

Thank you so much for listening, for choosing me and inviting me here today.