

(Witness's full name and date of birth
redacted at witness's request
to preserve witness's privacy 9/24/09.)

EXHIBIT 9 ~~9/24/09~~
DATE 2/11/09
HB 309

Testimony notes for HB 309 from Brenda

former 'Foster Child' – DOB
[REDACTED]

Read by Michele Sare – one of her 9 foster moms.
2/11/2009

Dear Chairman Sesso and Members of the Appropriations Committee;

Thank you for this opportunity to share Brenda's story of why foster children desperately need someone to help make sure that they get good healthcare. Brenda is unable to be here today because she could not leave her day-care business in Missoula, but she asked me to tell her story because she feels that this purpose is so important; this is what she wanted me to tell you:

- The number one thing is that – especially in small towns -- kids are being moved around, are struggling through adolescence or whatever horrible family stuff that they've been through and they're usually pretty messed-up – even if they think they are all tough and doing great – they really need a health kind of person to talk to and help them
- I was in 9 different foster homes in 2 years – from 14 to right when I turned 17; I never saw a doctor even when I was pretty sick. I had PID (it wasn't an STD) and I didn't get any medical care except when I went on my own and I had to pay for it
I think that Mental Health is very important – I think that if you studied the teen suicide rate you'd probably find that a lot of those kids are or have been in the foster system
- When my niece was in the hospital for drug over-dose and suicide ^{attempt} there were 3 other kids who had tried to hang themselves – 2 of them were foster kids...one of the kids, their foster family never came to see them
- Foster kids really need someone to talk to – confidential – about stuff that you can't say to anyone else; Social Workers are great, but they are spread thin – and healthcare stuff really isn't their thing. Too, your Social Worker may be 200 miles away. Foster kids really need an outlet – a place that's safe – where they feel like someone is really there for them
- Most of us got to where we felt like doing desperate things – Like feeling like getting pregnant – we found-out we could be emancipated at 16 and get healthcare and money if we had a baby (I didn't do that); but you just get desperate feelings – like drinking too much – a lot of us smoke – and I know some who used drugs too
- Not all of the families were very nice – only a couple seemed to care about how I was; one place kept the fridg locked and kept me and the other foster kid in a shed – when I got sick – they didn't take me to a doctor or anybody
Somebody really ought to regulate foster families to make sure that the kids get healthcare – I think some on them just wanted the checks
- I have no idea where any of my medical records are – and I think that maybe the school had my shot records, but I changed schools so much I don't know about that either

- I had pretty bad asthma as a kid and I never saw a doctor or had an inhaler or anything – I got pretty sick pretty often and no one took me to the doctor
- There was a court order that I see a therapist - from the bad stuff that happened in my family – but no one ever took me to a therapist – I think because she was in Missoula and I was moving around 3 other counties
- I was never signed-up with Medicaid or anything
- I had no idea how to get medical care – even if I had figured-out that I needed it!
- I didn't have any physicals except for the HS volleyball deal
- I never saw a dentist or eye doctor, but I needed glasses and even though I had that awful PID, I never had any tests or anything done
- I got a cyst on my face – but I was working at the local hospital – so I paid for it to get fixed and for the antibiotics
- The only time I went to a doctor was when I went to the Job Corps in Utah after I got out of the foster care system when I turned 17
- When I was 18 I got in a car accident – Medical care and insurance isn't a big priority to a kid who was pretty messed-up from all the bad family stuff and all the moving around - even with bankruptcy – I still owe \$217,000 – I'm 29 and have my own business – a day care – I work really hard, but I'll never pay that off
- From the PID and stuff that happened to me as a kid I have been having a lot of trouble with my periods; I had a colposcopy for cervical cancer when I was 14, but now – at 29 I may need a complete hysterectomy – I'll find-out this week - and I am always worried about cervical cancer. A doctor told me that I should have seen a doctor a lot sooner – maybe I wouldn't have to have a hysterectomy. I've got a beautiful 6 year old daughter – I am so happy – but it would have been cool to have more kids. I think that I am a really good mom. I really learned a lot – I have a lot to offer kids. I guess that is why I have a day-care
- I really think this is important – you could help a lot of kids. It is pretty hard being a foster kid; having someone who you know is there for you and will get you help when you need it – and will make you feel kind of safer – will help allot of kids. Being a foster kid sort of sucks – having a nurse who looks after you – kind of your own nurse – would really help

Thank you; please vote yes for HB 309.

Sincerely,

Brenda [REDACTED] – former Foster Child
 Submitted and read by my 'mom' – Michele Sare