

**United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law**

**Hearing on “Abuse in Foster Care: A Deeper Look”  
November 6, 2023**

**Written Testimony of Tiffani McLean-Camp**

Chairman Ossoff, Ranking Member Blackburn, and members of the Subcommittee.

My name is Tiffani McLean-Camp. I am 19 years old and in extended foster care here in Georgia. I first entered foster care in Georgia when I was 15, but that’s not where my story begins.

I was born in Detroit and removed from my biological mother when I was 2 years old. At the age of 3 I was adopted. From the age of 3 until I was 15 I was physically abused and neglected by my adoptive parents, and sexually abused by a family friend.

My adoptive parents were involved in 23 child protective services reports while living in Michigan. At one point I was removed from my adoptive parents and placed in foster care.

We moved to Georgia in 2019, but the abuse did not end there. One day I told a teacher that I was afraid to go home and they called DFCS. A case manager came to our house and asked me questions right in front of my parents. I was afraid I would get in trouble so I said everything was ok.

When no one protected me, I tried to protect myself. I tried to run away and to fight back, anything I could to escape. I was arrested for trying to protect myself from my father’s abuse. He was never arrested, and DFCS said that I was the problem. No one listened to me. No one believed me.

In February 2020 I was put in foster care. DFCS didn’t believe that I had been abused or neglected, even after I told them. To them I was unruly, a runaway, and a behavior problem.

I was in DFCS's custody until I turned 18 in May 2022. While in DFCS's custody, I experienced abuse, medical neglect, educational neglect, and was even sexually assaulted and trafficked.

I moved placements more than 20 times. I was put in group homes, detention centers, and foster homes. Like Mon'a, I was at Devereux. For the nearly 8 months I was there, my case manager didn't come to see me once. Like Mon'a, I remember the barbed wire fences, being overmedicated, and put in isolation. I remember staff forcing my pants down and forcing me to get a shot on my bottom and then feeling drowsy. They treated me like I wasn't a human.

I was also placed in group homes that were supposed to be safe houses for girls who were trafficked. Instead, I witnessed staff fighting with the other girls in the home, staff smoking weed, and not being allowed to go to school in person—not for my protection, but to protect group home staff other children.

When I turned 18 I signed myself out of care. When I found out I was pregnant, I called my case manager to tell her. DFCS still had my social security card and birth certificate. I needed information about transportation

But then I gave birth to my son. He was born premature and spent three weeks in the NICU. Foster care left me without housing or assistance I needed to take care of myself and my child. I wanted a better life for my son, so I called DFCS and signed back into care. DFCS couldn't find a placement for us, so my son and I had to spend the first 6 weeks of his life in a homeless shelter.

Then we were placed in a group home for teen moms. A staff member falsely accused me of neglecting my son and DFCS took him from me for a month. The court ordered DFCS to find a placement for me and my son to be together, and if they couldn't find somewhere for us that I'd get to see him 3 times week. But I didn't get to see him 3 times a week and we weren't placed together. For a month three bonds were broken—the bond between a mother and their child, the bond we were building for the first 3 months of his life while I was breastfeeding, and the bond created through skin to skin and other interactions important for his development. Instead, DFCS tried to force me to sign myself out of foster care.

On June 29th my son was returned to me. The court found that DFCS did not have **any** evidence that I was abusing or neglecting my son.

During all of this, DFCS neglected me. Since March I had been asking for therapy to help me with past trauma and postpartum depression. I asked to see a doctor for infections I had related to past abuse and pregnancy, including an infection caused by pieces of leftover placenta. I didn't see an OB-GYN until more than 6 months after giving birth to my son.

Despite how DFCS has treated me, I am still here because I have to focus on what is best for my son. I am working on getting my GED and plan on going to nursing school. Because I have an attorney and CASA who fight for me, listen to me, and believe me, my son and I are now living in a foster home where we feel safe and supported. I have a new case manager who listens to me and asks me what I need. For the first time since I was 15, I have hope.

I hope that through my testimony, other children won't have to go through what I did.