

# One Hundred Ninth Legislature - First Session - 2025

## Introducer's Statement of Intent

### LB368

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**Chairperson: Senator Carolyn Bosn**

**Committee: Judiciary**

**Date of Hearing: February 07, 2025**

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 368 would create a Youth in Care Bill of Rights for foster system-involved youth. While DHHS currently informs foster youth of their basic rights per federal law and agency regulations, current and former foster youth have expressed that the information they receive from DHHS about their rights when entering State care is inadequate and poorly retained. LB 368 will help ensure that youth in the foster system are well-versed in the rights they have during their time in foster care and that they know how to advocate for themselves. The bill would require that youth age 14 and up are expressly informed of these rights at regular intervals in an age-appropriate manner by their caseworker and guardian ad litem. It also creates a process for youth to file grievances with the Department.

Some such rights generally include, but are not limited to the following, unless deemed contrary to the child's safety or well-being by a court:

- to receive case-related information in their primary language,
- to attend or not attend religious services that align with their beliefs,
- to participate in age-appropriate extracurricular, cultural, and social activities,
- to be free from unreasonable search and seizure, discrimination, and exploitation,
- to be informed about and involved in their own court proceedings,
- to be provided medical services or refuse to consent to services, to be medicated only as necessary, and be informed about any medications' possible side effects,
- to be placed in a home with siblings when possible, or to visit siblings and family,
- if a parent themselves, to provide input about their own child's placement and care, and
- to file a grievance if they believe their rights have been violated.

**Principal Introducer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Senator Megan Hunt**