



(Dorothy Jenkins (right) with GU Executive Director Donna Butts)

### **Transcript of Dorothy Jenkins' testimony at the GU Congressional Briefing on Policies Impacting Grandparent Caregivers and Children in Foster Care.**

Thank you, thank you Donna. I'm here for the second time. When you spoke about age to me, it's just a number. The young lady said she's ...58 is a child. I'm 76. And I'll tell anybody, don't tell me I'm 76, tell me I'm 25. Cuz that's how I feel sometimes. I'm grateful to Freddie for accompanying me here today. Because although the age is 76, sometimes I need help get me where I'm going...and I'm grateful to Freddie for coming down to Washington for me.

Now we're going to talk about how we raise our children. It hasn't been good for me, but I take everyday as one day at a time because I know a greater maker and a greater helper that was there to help me and don't look for money, doing it for money; look for help and that's the only thing you're gonna get.

I raised 7 grandchildren, it's fact, you know people don't like to tell the truth, but the truth is the only thing that's gonna get us where we're going. You have to tell the truth, a story is telling the truth, the real truth. And to tell a story and to tell it today, you can tell it tomorrow, but if I'm here today telling you a lie, tomorrow you ask me the same thing, it deviates because I don't remember what I say today, but if it's the truth tomorrow I can tell you the same thing and that's what...how I raised my grandchildren, in fact I raised 7 grandchildren in and out of my house. But then I had 3 that I had to raise because I had no alternative, but to raise them. They came from my daughter, and I told Andreah last night, "Don't be afraid or don't be ashamed to tell about your past, some people are dying today because they're afraid to talk about their past and your past is killing you inside because someday you'll see somebody and you'll tell them about something that happened to you yesterday and you don't want to tell them because you're so ashamed. I reminded her last night so don't be ashamed to talk about her father, her mother or

whatever they did, or wherever they went because she is not at fault, the fault [is with] them. But she is alive to tell everybody how she is living after she lost her father and her mother to drugs, the drugs were here before she came.

Before I came, it took my daughter away and that's why I had the opportunity to raise my 3 children. I didn't get no help, the only help I got was from the Lord. And now the last 3 grandchildren I raised, Anthony, [he] went to Morgan State University. And when Anthony was a junior [his] mother died. Now, how am I gonna to send this boy to Morgan State University without a dime? With my social security money? Now that wasn't getting it, but you know he said, "Well if I can't go to Morgan State, I'm not going to another college." I look at this boy and I say, "You gotta be crazy, how are you going to go to Morgan State?" So I had a very good friend and I ask her, "Please loan me a hundred dollars to start his tuition." Now his tuition wasn't no hundred dollars, you know that, but I asked for a start. And I got the start and since I got the start Anthony entered Morgan State University in 2000 and graduated from Morgan State. And now Anthony still lives in Maryland and he is a computer analyst. He's doing great, great. He is now driving a Lexus and he is about to purchase his first home in Georgetown. Now you tell me that [isn't] great? He is 28 years old and you know I can dance on my head right now if I want to, because I'm happy.

And his mother died from drugs; I'm not ashamed to tell that. That was my daughter. I ask God after having 3 boys, I ask God for a girl; he gave me the girl and all the trouble, all the trouble. Don't ask [for] what you don't have, thank God for what you have and I sure thank God for the 3 boys I had and not worry about the girl. But she was a beautiful girl; she went from school crossing guard to correction. 15 years in correction and she met this handsome young man and he took her for a loop with a car and a house, he didn't intend to buy. And that went down the drain and I watched her die and she left me with 3 children, I had to raise them.

There's Warren, now Warren works for a facility, he is a custodian. Warren is 21 years, he has 2 jobs. Warren moved out on his own and he is paying 800 dollars a month rent. And that's great for him, 21 years old and your rent is something, you got to think 3 times before you go out to buy a house or rent an apartment.

And now I have Britney in the house. Britney goes to boy's choir in the Harlem. Britney is doing so-so because Britney is the baby. And like...children want everything. But thank God boy's choir is uniformed, so I bought 2 skirts, 2 pants, 4 shirts. So that's what Britney [wears to school], the shoes are a little different, but I don't have to worry about that. So don't worry about help. You got help, believe me.

And in the house I live in I wish all you good people out here, whether you are just a lay person, a congressman, or whoever you are, could come to the Bronx and see what Donna, Dave, Robert, [Senator Clinton] helped us to build. And I'm living there and I was the second tenant that moved there. Me and Britney have 2 bedrooms. And that's one thing I did wanted, a bedroom for Britney, because she said she was tired of sleeping

in the bed with grandma, because she don't want to sleep with grandma no-more. So we got that apartment, I have my own bedroom, Britney has hers. And we are living great.

The apartment is... I just cannot tell you how the apartments are, I love them to death... And anytime you are in the Bronx come to our house, you will find us there. But now I understand that they want to build another house. If there is money out there and if you have any extra money that you want to give to Donna and whoever in this organization to help them construct this other building I do hope that you will take it within your heart to say there is another house that needs to be build for grandmothers raising grandchildren because it's not easy raising the second generation after you've raised your children and they've gone about their business you have to take on the task of raising grandchildren. But I'm grateful today that Britney is 10 years old, Anthony is 28 years old, Dr. John Rodney Jenkins is my first grandson and he starts his own business and he is all over the Bronx, all over New York City and I'm grateful. If you had some money to buy John, you couldn't buy him for all the millions you had because he is my grandson and he is a legacy of the Jenkins family and I'm really proud. I'm glad to be here today and Donna when you have something else call somebody else, but I would love to come.