



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

March 9, 2022

To: Chair Schultz and members of the House Human Services Committee

RE: HF 3599 (Keeler) and HF3661 (Keeler)

Dear Chair Schultz and Committee Members,

The YMCA of the North provides outreach, emergency shelter, housing, prevention, intervention, and supportive services to more than 9,000 youth and families experiencing homelessness or housing instability, exploitation, or trafficking each year in the state of Minnesota. In 2021, the YMCA Youth and Family Services' outreach team had 7,792 engagements with youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability who were in need of immediate help. Available 365 days a year to connect these youth to caring adults and community resources, the YMCA received an average of 125 calls per month on our Youth Resource Line. Youth and Family Services provides holistic, wrap-around support, focused on increasing participant's self-sufficiency producing long-term, sustainable results. 92% of individuals participating in our housing program exit into permanent housing.

As a part of Minnesota's Youth Services Network, YMCA Youth and Family Services collaborates with youth serving agencies across the state to deliver a comprehensive and effective continuum of care. Collectively, we leverage our strengths and resources to provide individualized support and services. We partner with our communities to develop and implement effective solutions to end homelessness, exploitation and trafficking for those we serve. We are filling gaps and serving those who are most under-served. We need your partnership and support to continue to meet the increasing needs and create permanent change.

We are thankful for the investments from the state of Minnesota to support youth facing barriers over the last decade; however, additional resources are needed to fully fund the continuum of services. There are currently 4,876 youth still experiencing homelessness on any given night in Minnesota. Youth make up 51% of the total individuals experiencing homelessness in our state and BIPOC and LGBTQIA+2Spirit youth are far more likely to experience homelessness or exploitation. Many programs, including the YMCA's programs serving youth experiencing exploitation and trafficking currently have waitlists.

We ask you to please support additional funding to solve the housing crisis and end the exploitation and trafficking of youth in Minnesota through your support of HF3599 (Keeler) and HF3661 (Keeler). Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

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